Potamo of Alexandria and the Emergence of Eclecticism

in Late Hellenistic Philosophy

MYRTO HATZIMICHALI

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POTAMO OF ALEXANDRIA AND THE EMERGENCE OF ECLECTICISM IN LATE HELLENISTIC PHILOSOPHY

Eclecticism is a concept widely used in the history of ancient philosophy to describe the intellectual stance of diverse thinkers such as Plutarch, Cicero and Seneca. In this book the historical and interpretative problems associated with eclecticism are for the first time approached from the point of view of the only self-described eclectic philosopher from Antiquity, Potamo of Alexandria. The evidence is examined in detail with reference to the philosophical and wider intellectual background of the period. Potamo's views are placed in the context of key debates at the forefront of late Hellenistic philosophical activity to which he contributed, such as the criterion of truth, the first principles in physics, the moral end and the interpretation of Aristotle's esoteric works. The emergence of eclecticism is thus treated in connection with the major shift in philosophical interests and methods that marked the passage from Hellenistic to Imperial philosophy.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations of ancient authors and works generally follow the conventions of H. G. Liddell, R. Scott and H. S. Jones, *A Greek–English Lexicon* for Greek and the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* for Latin; for full titles of works which are not in LSJ and the *OLD* see the Index of passages cited. Abbreviations of journals are as in *L'Année Philologique*.

CMG	*Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*. Leipzig and Berlin 1907–.
CPF	F. Adorno *et al.* (eds.), *Corpus dei papiri filosofici greci e latini*. Florence 1992–2008.
DG	H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci*. Berlin 1879.
DK	H. Diels, rev. W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Berlin 1903–52.
DNP	H. Cancik and H. Schneider (eds.), *Der Neue Pauly: Enzyclopädie der Antike*. Stuttgart 1996–2002.
DPhA	R. Goulet *et al.*, *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*. Paris 1989–.
FGrHist	F. Jacoby *et al.*, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Berlin and Leiden 1923–58; Leiden 1994–.
IEph	*Die Inschriften von Ephesos*. Bonn 1979–84.
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae*. Berlin 1882–.
LSJ	H. G. Liddell, R. Scott and H. S. Jones, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, 9th edn Oxford 1996.
OGIS	*Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*. Leipzig 1903–5.
OLD	P. G. W. Glare (ed.), *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford 1968–82.

RE	G. Wissowa, W. Kroll *et al.* (eds.), *Paulys Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Stuttgart 1894–1980.
SB	F. Preisigke *et al.* (eds.), *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten*. Strassburg 1915–.
SGLG	K. Alpers, H. Erbse and A. Kleinlogel (eds.), *Sammlung griechischer und lateinischer Grammatiker*. Berlin 1974–.
SH	H. Lloyd-Jones and P. Parsons (eds.), *Supplementum Hellenisticum*. Berlin 1983.
SVF	J. von Arnim (ed.), *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*. Leipzig 1903–1905.
TLG	*Thesaurus Linguae Graecae.*
W	C. Wachsmuth, *Ioannis Stobaei Anthologii libri duo priores*. Berlin 1884.

Introduction

Eclecticism is not often thought of as representing something new, something that 'emerges' as a fresh beginning – the term is used more commonly for intellectual attitudes that are viewed as the end or the anticlimax after a period of development and innovation. This book proposes to examine the circumstances under which an unexpected claim of innovation was made on behalf of eclecticism. Potamo of Alexandria was the only ancient philosopher explicitly to declare himself an eclectic, and what is more, he went on to establish a new philosophical sect under the banner of eclecticism. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 1 alongside a survey of ancient and modern applications of the term 'eclectic', in ancient philosophy eclecticism has served primarily as a conventional characterisation for many different thinkers such as Cicero, Antiochus of Ascalon, Eudorus of Alexandria or Plutarch, whose views cannot be pinned down firmly to one of the traditional schools (such as the Academy, the Peripatos, the Stoa or Epicurus' Garden). Many of the problems arising from this characterisation were treated in the volume *The Question of Eclecticism*,[1] where chapters are devoted to Cicero, Philo of Alexandria and Plutarch among others. The main common feature among 'eclectic' or Eclectic[2] philosophers remains the elusive nature of their otherwise diverse ideas. What radically distinguishes the other thinkers from Potamo is that

[1] Dillon and Long 1988. Even in this volume, all the references to Potamo would fill about five pages in total.

[2] Throughout this book I have used the capital *E*- in 'Eclectic' only when there is reference to the *sect* established by Potamo (or other reported sects such as the medical ones at pp. 20–4).

they, formally at least, claimed allegiance to one of the traditional schools.

From a historical point of view, especially under the influence of Zeller,[3] eclecticism is closely associated with the period from the first century BC to the advent of Neoplatonism with Plotinus. The assumption usually is that in this period there were no real philosophical developments, only restructuring and repackaging of existing ideas, and what is more, that this was an unfortunate state of affairs, signalling intellectual decline. In recent years, however, this period and particularly the first century BC has attracted renewed attention under a different light. A key step was Michael Frede's 'Epilogue' to the *Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (1999), where he observed that from the mid second century BC there were significant changes in philosophical practice, particularly in terms of the structure and function of the traditional institutions, as well as in terms of philosophers' openness to ideas from different schools. More specifically, Frede drew attention to the all-but-disappearance of the Athenian schools, particularly after Sulla's sack of Athens, which made it increasingly difficult to define oneself in institutional terms. It was no longer the norm to frequent a particular location (such as the gymnasia of the Lyceum or the Academy), to follow the lectures of a recognised scholarch, or to engage in person in related debates. Philosophical identity towards the end of the Hellenistic period became a matter of personal intellectual outlook, as philosophers pursued individual careers, dispersed in different cultural centres and were often dependent on powerful Roman patrons. Their personal outlook normally manifested itself through professed adherence to a particular school (now in the looser sense of 'school of thought') or sect (*hairesis*).[4]

What was innovative and proved highly influential in the period from the late second century BC onwards may be found in the way in which philosophers undertook to construct their individual approaches, always with reference to the traditional schools and the

[3] See below p. 13.

[4] Our information on these professed self-identifications often comes second-hand from later sources. For example, we learn from Stobaeus that Eudorus was an Academic, see below p. 54.

increasingly towering figures of individuals such as Plato, Aristotle or Pythagoras, but without clear institutional frameworks, which may have been comfortable but were also restrictive. Thus even the traditional doctrines or methods of the various schools were not entirely set in stone, but were actively (re)negotiated. This is how we come to find Panaetius and Posidonius developing a productive interest in Plato and Aristotle, and Antiochus building on Stoic views from a professed Academic standpoint. The principal legacy from this period is the fact that philosophical developments were no longer primarily driven by (often polemical) ad hoc responses to problems and challenges by competitors and opponents, but involved taking account of the history of philosophy in broader terms. Original and challenging philosophical activity could now take the form of interpretation and historical evaluation, a form that was to be pursued more famously by figures such as Plotinus, Proclus and Alexander of Aphrodisias in Antiquity, and is in one way or another still practised by scholars working on ancient philosophy to this day. The turn to evaluation and interpretation of past achievements is paralleled in this period (particularly in the first century BC) by developments in other fields, notably grammar and medicine; some examples from these fields, centring on Alexandria, will be given in Chapter 2.

The radical change in the way philosophy was developed and disseminated, no longer through daily exchanges in the Athenian schools, but through books and the study of different traditions, left a mark on how the history of philosophy was viewed even within Antiquity. David Sedley has shown how the early first century BC represents a watershed after which no further developments are acknowledged by historians such as Diogenes Laertius or even Philodemus, who must have experienced the change first-hand.[5] The watershed is significant enough to warrant speaking of the first century BC as the 'end of the history of philosophy', given that philosophers after this period conceived of their own role as a contribution towards 'recovering and understanding the wisdom of the ancients' rather than as breaking new ground.[6] Sedley drew attention to the diaspora of philosophers away from Athens to alternative cultural centres such as Rhodes, Miletus, Alexandria and of course Italy, where Rome was

[5] Sedley 2003. [6] Sedley 2003: 36.

emerging as the new Imperial superpower. In the light of this, the present study attempts a survey of intellectual life in Alexandria, with a strong focus on philosophical activity, in order to situate Potamo's new sect in the context of this particular cultural centre (Chapter 2). It is particularly interesting that, whereas Alexandria had been the intellectual capital of the Hellenistic world, philosophy did not flourish there before the first century BC. The picture emerging from Chapter 2 may also be of interest to students of the Jewish thinker Philo, as it gives an indication of the available intellectual stimuli. Philo himself is not treated in this book, as his main period of activity falls about a generation after Potamo's.

Summing up, we may identify the main catalysts of first-century BC philosophy as (i) the demise of the Athenian schools and the ensuing dispersal of philosophers to multiple centres, and (ii) the interest in recovering and interpreting ancient wisdom. These are also the two most relevant factors for understanding the 'emergence of eclecticism', alongside the continuing importance of defining oneself in sectarian terms, since eclecticism is largely concerned with sectarian boundaries. Frede approached the phenomenon of eclecticism in late Hellenistic philosophy in terms of the second of the two factors just listed, pointing to the consequences of granting authoritative status to selected ancients (most prominently Plato), whose views then had to be taken into account across school boundaries. At the same time, Frede acknowledged that eclecticism may also signify an anti-authoritative stance.[7] Frede's comments set the path for a distinction between two types of eclecticism, differing in their attitudes towards authority. On the one hand, a philosopher may treat one figure as the superior authority and subscribe to the relevant sect, while also being favourable to ideas emanating from another: thus Panaetius remained loyal to Zeno on most matters, and no one will deny that he was a Stoic, but he also praised the 'divine Plato' (Cic. *Tusc.* 1.79). Antiochus of Ascalon brought Aristotle and Zeno under the banner of Plato's authority by arguing that they were all essentially in agreement. On the other hand, the rival claims of different authorities may lead one to renounce authority altogether, and treat all the important thinkers of the past on an equal footing. While in the first case the philosopher

[7] Frede 1999: 786–9.

will identify himself with the sect of his primary authority, in the second case he must either belong to no sect at all, or propose a new alternative.

Thus we come to what is essentially 'new' and 'emerging' about eclecticism in the late first century BC. It is the fact that now it acquires the status of an independent sect, introduced as an alternative to and a competitor with existing sects. Our main source of information about this sect[8] is the end of the Prologue to Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, where we first learn about Potamo of Alexandria:[9]

ἔτι δὲ πρὸ ὀλίγου καὶ Ἐκλεκτική τις αἵρεσις εἰσήχθη ὑπὸ Ποτάμωνος τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρέως, ἐκλεξαμένου τὰ ἀρέσαντα ἐξ ἑκάστης τῶν αἱρέσεων. ἀρέσκει δ' αὐτῷ, καθά φησιν ἐν τῇ Στοιχειώσει, κριτήρια τῆς ἀληθείας εἶναι τὸ μὲν ὡς ὑφ' οὗ γίνεται ἡ κρίσις, τουτέστι τὸ ἡγεμονικόν· τὸ δὲ ὡς δι' οὗ, οἷον τὴν ἀκριβεστάτην φαντασίαν. ἀρχάς τε τῶν ὅλων τήν τε ὕλην καὶ τὸ ποιοῦν, ποιότητά τε καὶ τόπον· ἐξ οὗ γὰρ καὶ ὑφ' οὗ καὶ ποίῳ [fort. ποιῷ] καὶ ἐν ᾧ. τέλος δὲ εἶναι ἐφ' ὃ πάντα ἀναφέρεται, ζωὴν κατὰ πᾶσαν ἀρετὴν τελείαν, οὐκ ἄνευ τῶν τοῦ σώματος κατὰ φύσιν καὶ τῶν ἐκτός.

In addition, a certain Eclectic sect was recently introduced by Potamo of Alexandria, who chose his doctrines from each of the sects. He believes, as he says in the *Elementary Teaching*, that the criteria of truth are, on the one hand, in the sense of 'that by whose agency' the judgement is made, namely the ruling part [of the soul]; on the other hand, in the sense of 'that through which' [judgement is made], such as the most accurate impression. And [he says] that the fundamental principles of all things are matter and that which makes, as well as quality and place; in other words 'that from which', and 'that by the agency of which', and 'by what kind/'by a certain kind', and 'that in which'. And [he believes] the end is that to which all things are referred, a life perfect with respect to all virtue, not without the things pertaining to the body by nature and external things. (D.L. 1.21)

This passage, with its important but also tantalisingly brief report on Potamo's Eclectic sect, will form the basis for most of the discussion and analysis in this book, and its different parts with the problems they raise will be scrutinised in detail in the relevant chapters. Whereas

[8] For the other vital piece of evidence on the sect see below pp. 76–9.
[9] For Potamo's date see below pp. 68–72. All translations from Greek and Latin are mine unless otherwise indicated.

scholars have hitherto dealt with eclecticism mostly in the first of the senses described above, and have focused on those philosophers that exemplify it, Potamo offers the opportunity to examine eclecticism in the second sense, namely as a programmatically distinct alternative to ancient authorities and their respective sects.

The most impressive piece of information is that there was in Antiquity such a thing as an 'Eclectic sect'. This expression should give us pause for a moment, because at first glance it appears to contain both a contradiction and a tautology. The tautology arises from the fact that the verbs αἱροῦμαι and ἐκλέγομαι, from which 'sect' (*hairesis*) and 'eclectic' are respectively derived, both mean 'to select', resulting in a meaning close to 'selective selection/preference'. But any concerns caused by the juxtaposition of these two terms may be removed if we consider that *hairesis* had become a conventional term for philosophical schools or sects, indicating the group of people who had made a certain ideological choice and their ideological common ground,[10] rather than the choice itself. Thinking of *hairesis* as a group of people with a particular theoretical stance can also help solve the apparent contradiction of an 'Eclectic sect': the problem is that eclecticism normally entails a rejection of all sects and a programmatic refusal to become bound by any specific set of commitments.[11] Therefore an Eclectic sect makes better sense if we imagine it as a group of thinkers sharing this programmatic refusal rather than as a purveyor of specific doctrines – in the latter case there would be little scope for its members to be Eclectic.[12]

An important distinction, however, must be made between what makes better sense to us as far as eclecticism is concerned, and what applies to Potamo of Alexandria and his sect. Given that our information on Potamo consists in the few lines of the extract cited above and very little else, the results of the present study will have to remain tentative and provisional, as is always the case when dealing with lacking and fragmentary evidence from the ancient world. One finds oneself more commonly enumerating what we do not know rather

10 This does not have to imply any sort of institutional or otherwise official organisation. See also below p. 75.

11 See Chapter 1, pp. 9–17.

12 See further "Conclusions" (Chapter 7), pp. 179–81.

than interpreting what we do know. In many places I have opted for what seemed to me the most likely interpretation of our scanty material, but it cannot be considered the 'final answer' on any of these points, as new evidence, overlooked parallels and comparative material or new approaches may always throw a different light on the problems.

From the few sentences available it is not possible to grasp exactly what Potamo believed, or how he came to believe it and with what arguments he supported his views. We cannot identify any underlying ideology or rationale that governed and dictated his eclectic choice of particular doctrines. We know that his work entitled *Elementary Teaching* contained his views on three topics that were hotly contested in the Hellenistic period and are picked up in the ensuing doxographical tradition, namely the criterion of truth, the first principles and the moral end. The presentation of these issues also echoes the traditional division of philosophy into logic, physics and ethics. As it is not possible to uncover Potamo's underlying beliefs and motives, I shall try to use his eventual pronouncements in these three key areas as indications for the outcome and outward presentation of his eclectic project. We possess some valuable snippets of information on what someone who introduced a new school of thought, based solely on selecting from other schools, eventually came to put forward as his own views. I will try to assess what this selection amounted to by examining the philosophical content of these views and juxtaposing this with the third-party information that he 'chose his doctrines from each of the sects'. As a result, the elucidation of Potamo's pronouncements in Chapter 4 will take the form of separate examinations of the three issues, using parallels and comparanda from different periods of ancient philosophy, aiming to identify potential sources for Potamo's selection and to reconstruct more broadly the *status quaestionis* on these issues in the first century BC. On the other hand, I have tried to bring every available piece of information to bear on the overall assessment of Potamo, which is why I have included passages that cannot be attributed to the Eclectic philosopher with absolute certainty. He is likely to be behind some mathematical and geometrical material found in Simplicius (Chapter 5), while there are more doubts over the attribution of extracts from a gnomic collection and a synonym-lexicon (Chapter 6).

It is my intention to promote our knowledge of philosophical developments in the first century BC, and hopefully stimulate further research on some of the issues raised. Eventually (Chapter 7) I will provide some suggestions for a response to the central puzzle of the Eclectic sect and its elevation of eclecticism to principal driving force of one's philosophical project, with the implicit rejection of all other systems as unsatisfactory.

CHAPTER I

Eclecticism in modern and ancient thought

ECLECTICISM AS A TECHNICAL TERM IN MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

Eclecticism has become a popular category for describing an intellectual stance that involves approving of and adopting views that are not part of a uniform tradition, but might stem from different, even incompatible, ideologies. In the study of ancient philosophy the term is used, often in a derogatory sense, for the appropriation of elements that do not form part of the 'official' set of doctrines propagated by the school one claims to belong to.[1] The pejorative connotations usually arise from the assessment that these foreign elements are not properly and coherently integrated. This widespread modern usage is overwhelmingly associated with thinkers who did make claims of allegiance to a particular mainstream school such as the Stoa or the Academy, while it seems to leave outside its scope the establishment of a sect with a self-proclaimed eclectic agenda from the outset, an intellectual enterprise that is quite different from the progressive incorporation of 'alien' material into a dominant system. This type of initiative is worthy of independent study, with the understanding that a philosopher who chooses to call himself 'eclectic' and in addition tries to create a new group and attract a following based on precisely this agenda must be offering something more radical than a modification of one school's ideas. The information we have for one such philosophical movement in Antiquity, initiated by Potamo of Alexandria towards the end of the first century BC, is indicative of a *sui generis* project.

[1] In the case of the sceptic, any fully committed adoption of doctrines automatically means that he is stepping outside his school's practice.

The precise meaning and connotations of eclecticism have passed through contrasting phases, reflecting different tendencies in the history of Western thought. The word itself is derived from the Greek verb ἐκλέγειν (often used in the middle voice, ἐκλέγεσθαι), which means 'to select', 'to choose'. This idea of exercising one's own choice carries connotations of freedom and independence from overbearing authorities, connotations that were particularly appealing to authors of the Enlightenment. Denis Diderot, greatly influenced by and drawing heavily on Jakob Brucker's *Historia critica philosophiae* (Leipzig 1742–4), the definitive work on history of philosophy for the eighteenth century,[2] composed the *Encyclopédie* entry on 'Eclectisme'. The article turned into a long history of ideas and filled seventy-four pages (by contrast with the average length of twelve to twenty pages for other philosophical movements); it contained the following definition:

> The eclectic is a philosopher who, overriding prejudice, tradition, antiquity, universal agreement, authority, in a word everything that oppresses most minds, dares to think for himself, to go back to the clearest general principles, to examine them, discuss them, to admit nothing but the testimony of his experience and his reason; and from all the philosophies, which he has analysed without bias and without partiality, to make for himself a special and domestic philosophy that belongs to him . . . He is not a man who plants or sows; he is a man who collects and sifts.[3]

This attitude towards eclecticism was rejected by Kant, who opposed 'historical knowledge' (based on someone else's reason) to 'rational knowledge' that results from examination of the principles which have provided the ground and structure for philosophical opinions over

[2] For Brucker's influence on Diderot and Diderot's use of the *Historia critica* see Proust 1982: 233–54.

[3] 'L'éclectique est un philosophe qui foulant aux piés le préjugé, la tradition, l'ancienneté, le consentement universel, l'autorité, en un mot tout ce qui subjuge la foule des esprits, ose penser de lui-même, remonter aux principes généraux les plus clairs, les examiner, les discuter, n'admettre rien que sur le témoignage de son expérience et de sa raison; et de toutes les philosophies, qu'il a analysées sans égard et sans partialité, s'en faire une particulière et domestique qui lui appartienne . . . Ce n'est point un homme qui plante ou qui sème; c'est un homme qui recueille et qui crible' (*Encyclopédie* v 270, my transl.). Cf. Donini 1988a: 19. It should be pointed out that Diderot and Brucker had rather different goals; while the latter was interested in the history of philosophy and its usefulness as a discipline, the former subordinated these ideas to a call for anti-conformism and a fight against authority. Cf. Braun 1973: 154–6.

the course of history. This proved to be a very influential attitude, and consequently eclecticism became primarily associated with a derivative and non-systematic way of thinking. Such negative connotations were consistently reflected in mainstream reference resources such as, for example, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on 'Eclecticism' (eleventh edition, 1911, VIII, 887), which contrasts sharply with its predecessor in Diderot's work:

> Eclecticism always tends to spring up after a period of vigorous constructive speculation, especially in the later stages of a controversy between thinkers of pre-eminent ability. Their respective followers, and more especially cultured laymen, lacking the capacity for original work, seeking for a solution in some kind of compromise, take refuge in a combination of those elements in the opposing systems, which seem to afford a sound practical theory.

An exception to this dismissive attitude is found in early nineteenth-century France, where Victor Cousin proposed eclecticism as the only way forward for philosophy after many stages of development, if it was not to submit again to authority or keep retracing a succession of obsolete systems. The history of philosophy was a central field of study at the time, and one of its aims was to avoid repetitions and common mistakes, especially with respect to the various philosophical ideas current in the eighteenth century. For Cousin, eclecticism consisted in selecting 'what is true' and rejecting 'what is false' in existing systems, in an effort to surpass their weaknesses and construct a superior philosophy:[4] 'what I am recommending is an enlightened eclecticism which, judging all the schools with fairness and also with benevolence, borrows from them what truth they have to offer, and ignores what is false in them'.[5] Cousin was very confident about being able to distinguish true from false and right from wrong. From the 'Avant-propos' written for the 1853 re-edition of his 1817 lectures 'On the True, the Beautiful and the Good', we can see that the standards for truth and selection were set by what he then called 'spiritualisme', a philosophy that he traced historically from Socrates and Plato through the Gospel to Descartes, while political

[4] Cf. Kelley 2001: 577–9.

[5] 'Ce que je recommande, c'est un éclectisme éclairé qui, jugeant avec équité et même avec bienveillance toutes les écoles, leur emprunte ce qu'elles ont de vrai, et néglige ce qu'elles ont de faux' (Cousin 1872: II, my transl.).

and educational concerns were also paramount. It is evident, therefore, that Cousin's eclecticism did not proceed 'from scratch', that is from a fully open-minded survey of earlier philosophical systems, but it operated on the basis of standards set by particular ideological commitments and by the privileging of certain traditions over others.[6]

Interestingly, as Donini remarks,[7] the developments outlined above do not fully correspond to equivalent attitudes towards the history of ancient philosophy. Even Diderot contrasted his description of the ideal eclectic philosopher with the ancients who were associated with the term in his time, namely the Neoplatonists. Diderot suggested (again following Brucker) that they did not merit the name 'eclectics', and that a more suitable characterisation for philosophy emanating from Alexandria, that melting pot of every type of mysticism and religious superstition, would be 'syncretism'.[8] It should be pointed out at this stage that the association of Neoplatonism with the eclectic tradition is very much connected with the text that will form the main focus of the present study, namely the passage where Diogenes Laertius reports the establishment of an Eclectic school in Alexandria by Potamo (D.L. 1.21). The geographical connection encouraged scholars to postulate a master–pupil sequence linking Potamo, Ammonius Saccas and Plotinus.[9] They could also point to an apparent reference to a Potamo among Plotinus' associates in Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* 9.10–11 (a reading that is now considered doubtful) as well as, of course, to the fact that Neoplatonists 'selected' ideas from systems and traditions other than Plato's.[10] Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* offered further ammunition for such a treatment of Plotinus as an eclectic, because it is said there that 'in his writings there is a mixture of hidden Stoic and Peripatetic doctrines; and Aristotle's *Metaphysics* has been distilled here' (14.4–7).[11]

[6] See Cousin 1872: vi–vii; Schneider 1998: 180–1. [7] Donini 1988a: 21–5.

[8] *Encyclopédie* v, 271. Cf. Donini 1988a: 21; Schneider 1998: 176.

[9] Plotinus studied with Ammonius Saccas in Alexandria in the mid third century AD (Porph. *Plot.* 3). Those who made the connection with Potamo did not face a chronological problem, as they adopted for Potamo a date close to Diogenes' own.

[10] This approach can be traced back to authors such as Gerard Vossius (1577–1649) and Theophilus Gale (1628–78).

[11] ἐμμέμικται δ' ἐν τοῖς συγγράμμασι καὶ τὰ Στωϊκὰ λανθάνοντα δόγματα καὶ τὰ Περιπατητικά. καταπεπύκνωται δὲ καὶ ἡ Μετὰ τὰ Φυσικὰ τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους πραγματεία.

It was not until after Brucker's work appeared, endorsing this Alexandrian succession but condemning it as syncretistic, that H. G. Gloeckner and G. C. Ritter undertook to extricate Potamo from it, in a dissertation devoted exclusively to our Eclectic philosopher: *De Potamonis Alexandrini philosophia eclectica recentiorum Platonicorum disciplinae admodum dissimili disputatio* ('Discussion of the eclectic philosophy of Potamo of Alexandria, which is very different from the school of the late Platonists'), published in Leipzig in 1745. This dissertation correctly drew attention to the total lack of any reference to Ammonius and other Neoplatonists as adherents of an Eclectic sect (on the contrary, they represented themselves as committed Platonists), and also identified un-Platonic elements in Diogenes' report on Potamo, such as Stoic influences and the absence of transcendent Forms (see Chapter 4).

In subsequent times, as we saw, the term 'eclecticism' became just as discredited as 'syncretism' and this development had an effect on the study of ancient philosophy, where it could now be freely applied to 'unproductive' periods. Eduard Zeller's influential *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* ('Greek philosophy in its historical development') proved decisive in associating eclecticism with what was deemed to be a period of decline. Zeller discussed under the heading 'Eklekticismus' the period from the first century BC to the time of Plotinus (in Zeller's time Neoplatonism had been successfully rescued from its by now negative eclectic implications).

More recent scholarship has questioned Zeller's approach, often showing that the work of philosophers termed 'eclectics' did not merit all these pejorative implications but often revealed innovative and philosophically interesting thought. Special reference must be made to the volume edited by Dillon and Long on *The Question of 'Eclecticism'* (1988). Contributors examined various themes from the work of authors regularly associated with eclecticism, and largely concluded that the term needed substantial qualification and often acquired different connotations when applied to different philosophers. For example, Mansfeld showed that the eclecticism of Philo of Alexandria was coloured by his activity as an exegete of Scripture and his selections from Greek philosophy were assessed according to the superior teachings of Moses (Mansfeld 1988). Dillon argued that 'orthodoxy' and 'eclecticism' are highly unsatisfactory terms for

describing the attitude of Plutarch and his fellow Platonists towards Aristotelian and Stoic views (Dillon 1988), a conclusion that was echoed by Donini (1988b).

It is highly significant that all the ancient thinkers discussed in that volume maintained at least a formal allegiance to a single tradition, even if the rules of loyalty were not always straightforward. Long demonstrated Ptolemy's dissimilarity in this respect because, as a practising scientist rather than a philosopher, Ptolemy pursued a methodology of 'optimum agreement' to ensure as broad approval of his solutions as possible, while remaining fully committed to them (Long 1988). As Sedley has remarked in a paper on philosophical allegiance, 'apart from the curious individual called Potamo, D.L. 1.21, no ancient philosopher is an eclectic'.[12] As a result of this lack of a unitary concept, there is a strong sense in which any definition of eclecticism that is based on philosophers termed 'eclectic' by modern scholars (whether in Zeller's derogatory sense or otherwise) cannot be applicable in the same sense to a philosopher who chooses to describe his own practice as eclecticism. In fact, Donini in his introductory chapter on 'The history of the concept of eclecticism' distinguishes as many as six different interpretations of the concept, which is shown to be ambiguous in the ways in which it is applied by modern scholarship. He also acknowledges that eclecticism as a deliberate plan was a 'rare and unusual position in antiquity', which does not correspond to the most common contemporary use of the term to denote the frequent creative incorporation of apparently alien elements into one's 'primary' doctrine, always maintaining at least formal allegiance to one of the main schools.[13]

ANCIENT REFERENCES TO ECLECTICISM AND RELATED TERMS

Given the discrepancy between modern applications of the term 'eclectic' and ancient claims of philosophical allegiance, a separate examination of explicit ancient references to eclecticism and related terms seems particularly worthwhile. The fact is that the adjective 'eclectic' (ἐκλεκτικός,-ή,-όν, as opposed to other derivatives or forms of the verb ἐκλέγειν, 'to select') was very rare in Greek literature

[12] Sedley 1989: 118–19 n. 48. [13] Donini 1988a: 31–3.

(returning only thirty instances in a *TLG* search), even in its non-technical sense of 'one who selects'.[14] The Stoics used the term 'selective value' (ἐκλεκτική ἀξία) to characterise things that are preferable according to nature (Plu. *Comm. not.* 1071B; Antipater *SVF* III 124; Chrysippus *SVF* III 11), so perhaps the word would not be so rare if more Stoic texts had survived. But *eklektikos* indicating an all-round intellectual stance is even more uncommon in ancient literature. It is therefore all the more remarkable that there existed, for a short time at least, a separate sect with this very agenda. And yet, it does not appear to have gained very widespread recognition, as no other author makes any reference to it apart from Diogenes Laertius (1.21).

In order to reach a better understanding of Potamo's project, it will be helpful to construct a background by comparing the few other instances of ancient thinkers who similarly defined their own or someone else's method or system as eclectic. Apart from the report on Potamo, the only instances of the adjective ἐκλεκτικός,-ή,-όν indicating one's intellectual stance come from Clement of Alexandria and two texts of medical doxography that had been attributed to Galen. Before we look at this evidence, it is worth noting that Galen himself in his genuine work proclaimed an autonomous and non-partisan attitude towards medical and philosophical sects, for which he used the language of eclecticism:

ἀκούσας δ' ὅτι δούλους ὀνομάζω τοὺς ἑαυτοὺς ἀναγορεύσαντας Ἱπποκρατείους ἢ Πραξαγορείους ἢ ὅλως ἀπό τινος ἀνδρός, ἐκλέγοιμι δὲ τὰ παρ' ἑκάστοις καλά, δεύτερον ἤρετο . . .

Having heard that I call slaves those who name themselves Hippocratics or Praxagoreans or generally after some man, and that I select what is good in each one, he asked me a second question . . . (Gal. *Lib.Prop.* XIX 13 K)

καθάπερ οὖν, ἔφη, δεῖ μὴ προπετῶς ἀπὸ μιᾶς αἱρέσεως ἀναγορεύειν σεαυτόν, ἀλλ' ἐν χρόνῳ παμπόλλῳ μανθάνειν τε καὶ κρίνειν αὐτάς, οὕτως <ἃ> πρὸς ἁπάντων μὲν ἀνθρώπων ἐπαινεῖται, συνομολογεῖται δὲ καὶ τοῖς φιλοσόφοις εἶναι ζηλωτέα, ταῦτα καὶ νῦν ἤδη καὶ διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου ζηλωτέον ἀσκεῖν.

Just as, he said, you must not irresponsibly name yourself after a single sect, but study and judge them for a very long time, so you must now aspire to put

14 For example, Dionysius of Halicarnassus uses it twice for the orator's selection of appropriate arguments (*Lys.* 15.19; *Comp.* 2.43).

into practice throughout your life the things that are approved by everyone and which it is agreed that philosophers must aspire to (Gal. *Aff.Dig.* v 42 K)

What Galen proposes to select, and has his father ('he said') set in opposition to blind clinging to one sect, consists of 'what is good' or of what is universally approved and held to be a suitable pursuit for philosophers. Elsewhere Galen criticises those who cling to sectarian commitments at the expense of what is evident to all and engage in factional polemics for the sake of competition (*PHP* v 778–9 K).

The language of selection (especially the verb ἐκλέγειν) was widely used in philosophical, medical and theological works to indicate choice of the 'good' ideas of one's predecessors and, by implication, avoidance of the 'bad' ones. A telling example in this regard is Aristotle's method of preparing collections of premises for easy future reference and use, based on his predecessors' opinions (δόξαι, ἔνδοξα). *Topics* 1.14.105a34–b18 is an important early instance where the terminology of selecting is used in connection with organising the philosophical tradition into structures that will aid one's own argumentative purposes: 'premises must be selected . . . making ready for use either the opinions of everyone, or of most, or those of the wise . . . it is also useful to produce these by selecting not only premises that are actually held by some, but also those similar to them . . . We must also select from written works and produce tables, listing premises separately according to each genus.'[15]

But the passage cited above from Galen's *De libris propriis* is more remarkable in the sense that it proposes an intellectual tactic explicitly contrasted with nailing one's colours to an authority's mast. This is reminiscent of the free critical spirit that we have seen associated with eclecticism in modern Europe,[16] and has another parallel in the work

[15] τὰς μὲν οὖν προτάσεις ἐκλεκτέον . . . ἢ τὰς πάντων δόξας προχειριζόμενον ἢ τὰς τῶν πλείστων ἢ τὰς τῶν σοφῶν . . . χρήσιμον δὲ καὶ τὸ ποιεῖν αὐτὰς ἐν τῷ ἐκλέγειν μὴ μόνον τὰς οὔσας ἐνδόξους ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ὁμοίας ταύταις . . . ἐκλέγειν δὲ χρὴ καὶ ἐκ τῶν γεγραμμένων λόγων, τὰς δὲ διαγραφὰς ποιεῖσθαι περὶ ἑκάστου γένους ὑποτιθέντας χωρίς. Compare also Aristotle's opposition of well-founded judgement and 'selection' (ἐκλογή) informed by expert understanding to Isocrates' 'collection' (συναγωγή) of popular laws (*EN* 10.9.1181a14–19).

[16] Cf. Frede 1999: 786: 'Galen, who is one of the few philosophers in antiquity actually to characterize himself as eclectic, espouses eclecticism out of just such an anti-authoritative attitude.'

of Horace, where the references to selection are implicit rather than explicit. Horace uses the rhetoric of philosophical self-reliance and self-sufficiency at *Ep.* 1.1.13–19, stating that he does not belong to any school and is not compelled to follow any teacher's prescriptions (*nullius addictus iurare in verba magistri*, *Ep.* 1.1.14). His aim is to decline politely Maecenas' request for more lyric poetry, presenting his decision as the result of a conversion to philosophy, or the 'search for what is true and fitting' (*quid verum atque decens curo et rogo*, *Ep.* 1.1.11). This engagement with philosophy is presented through the metaphor of journeying at sea, following different precepts at different times, as a traveller who is washed ashore in different places. In these appeals to intellectual freedom there is a very important difference from what Potamo of Alexandria was hoping to achieve: for Galen and Horace eclecticism and/or free choice is synonymous with the rejection of all sects and the refusal to participate in anything sectarian, whereas Potamo aimed to give eclecticism the very status of a sect. This notion of an 'eclectic sect' contains several puzzles, even contradictions, as we have already seen.

Clement's use of the adjective 'eclectic' occurs in a passage from his *Stromateis* where he discusses the value of pagan philosophy and makes the point that like god-sent rain, even god-sent philosophy can indiscriminately nourish both desirable and undesirable elements. He then pursues the Christian analogy between agriculture and teaching ('spiritual planting') and observes the variety of beneficial (βιωφελεῖς) agricultural tasks that will multiply the desirable effects of rain and nourishment, before moving on to the role of philosophy:

φιλοσοφίαν δὲ οὐ τὴν Στωϊκὴν λέγω οὐδὲ τὴν Πλατωνικὴν ἢ τὴν Ἐπικούρειόν τε καὶ Ἀριστοτελικήν, ἀλλ' ὅσα εἴρηται παρ' ἑκάστῃ τῶν αἱρέσεων τούτων καλῶς, δικαιοσύνην μετὰ εὐσεβοῦς ἐπιστήμης ἐκδιδάσκοντα, τοῦτο σύμπαν τὸ ἐκλεκτικὸν φιλοσοφίαν φημί. ὅσα δὲ ἀνθρωπίνων λογισμῶν ἀποτεμόμενοι παρεχάραξαν, ταῦτα οὐκ ἄν ποτε θεῖα εἴποιμ' ἄν.

In the case of philosophy I do not mean the Stoic or Platonic or Epicurean and Aristotelian, but what has been well said in each of these sects, teaching justice along with pious knowledge – this entire eclectic [approach] is what I call philosophy. But the part of human reasoning which they have cut off and falsified, this I would never call divine. (Clem. *Strom.* 1.7.37)

The prevailing sense here is that this 'eclectic approach' constitutes a highly selective attitude towards Greek philosophy with strict standards based on Christian ('divine') ideals. Clement's 'true philosophy' ('what I call philosophy') is not a free selection of Stoic, Platonic, Epicurean and Aristotelian doctrines, but only the desirable elements from these systems inasmuch as they support Christian wisdom ('teaching justice along with pious knowledge'). Thus for Clement eclecticism depends on a set of a priori commitments, which act as the criteria for his selective approach and differentiate him from Potamo, whose eclecticism seems to be an end in itself, not defined by such religious requirements (this impression of Potamo might have been different if more was known about his methodology and rationale). Hadot described Clement's attitude as the type of eclecticism that subordinates the approved but diverse views of earlier philosophers to a superior point of view, in this case Christianity, and drew a comparison with Philo of Alexandria, whose equivalent reference point was the teaching of Moses.[17] Clement and Philo may have shared with Potamo the consciousness that they were selecting and combining from fundamentally different systems; but their overarching agendas and religious commitments set them radically apart from Potamo. Thus Clement, despite his use of the term *to eklektikon*, is closer to those authors who were prepared to admit elements they acknowledged to be of different provenance into a dominant system they were committed to. A good example of this approach of openly adopting 'alien' views while acknowledging them as such is offered by Philodemus, when he puts truth and usefulness above sectarian concerns at *Oec.* col. XXVII.12–20: 'If we have conceded that some of the ideas stemming from Xenophon and Theophrastus were not unconvincing even to philosophers, we must adopt those too, being more ashamed to omit something useful than to borrow from others.'

This constructive attitude was contrasted by Epicurus with that of a thinker who does not integrate borrowed ideas but tries to combine discrepant material. His position on the right and wrong

[17] Hadot 1990: 161–2; she makes use of a definition from A. Lalande's *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la Philosophie* (Paris 1969) s.v. 'Eclectisme' (b): 'Conciliation, par la découverte d'un point de vue supérieur, de thèses philosophiques présentées d'abord comme opposées par les auteurs qui les soutenaient.' Cf. Mansfeld 1988.

use of other philosophers' ideas and on the issue of plagiarism takes the form of a polemic against those who do not pay due attention to semantic distinctions for the same terms across different systems.[18] The word for such an inept philosopher is συμπεφορημένος ('mixed/confused/jumbled'); he is not the one who brings together his own and others' doctrines, but one who mixes discrepant views, whether they are originally his or not.[19] For Epicurus, therefore, the more significant factor when it comes to co-existence of different ideas within a system is coherence, not the paternity of the ideas.

The same expression (this time the adverb συμπεφορημένως) was used in a similar pejorative way by Theophrastus for the process of mixing and combining doctrines, with reference to Diogenes of Apollonia (T4 Laks = A5 DK). This passage has been widely interpreted as a charge of eclecticism (in the sense of lack of originality) on Theophrastus' part, but, as Laks points out, the criticism lies in the allegation that Diogenes' work contained contradictory views, and is not simply based on the observation that some were drawn from Anaxagoras and others from Leucippus (again, the problem is the incoherence rather than the borrowing itself). As with most ancient authors that have been characterised as eclectic in modern scholarship, it can be shown that there was more to Diogenes' appropriation of earlier material than simple 'eclectic' borrowing.[20]

We can see, therefore, that there was in Antiquity some unease over the legitimacy of adopting doctrines from different predecessors, but it was mainly about the internal coherence of the resulting system rather than its 'purity', and it was not associated with the language of eclecticism.

To find an ancient instance where the language of 'selecting' etc. is associated with condemnation of particular intellectual practices, one would have to go back to Heraclitus, and point to the interpretation of 22B129 DK, according to which Pythagoras was 'patching together for

[18] Leone 1984: 37.

[19] συμπεφορημένος γάρ ἐστ[ι]ν οὐχ ὃς ἂ̣ν τὸ δι[ε]σπαρμένον δόγμα μεθ' ἑτέρω[ν] ἀλλοτρίω̣ν ἑαυτοῦ δογμάτων εἰ[ς] [τ]αὐτὸ σ[υ]ν̣άγηι, ἀλλ' ὃς ἂν ⌈μὴ̣⌉ ὁμο[λογ]ούμεν' ἀ[λ]λήλοις τινά, [εἴ]τε παρ' α[ὑτοῦ] εἴτε̣ [π̣]αρ' [ἄλλ]ων ⌈σ⌉υντιθ̣ῆι (*Nat.* 14, col. XL.9–16 Leone). Cf. Donini 1988a: 17.

[20] Laks 1983: xxix–xxxiii; 93.

his private wisdom what he has gleaned from his reading of books':[21] Πυθαγόρης Μνησάρχου ἱστορίην ἤσκησεν ἀνθρώπων μάλιστα πάντων καὶ ἐκλεξάμενος ταύτας τὰς συγγραφὰς ἐποιήσατο ἑαυτοῦ σοφίην, πολυμαθίην, κακοτεχνίην ('Pythagoras the son of Mnesarchus practised inquiry most of all men, and having selected these compositions he created his own wisdom, his wide learning, his malpractice'). For Schofield, the point of contention this time is originality, and the pejorative use of 'selecting' or 'plundering' here does not imply an accusation of intellectual confusion so much as of plagiarism, and is part of Heraclitus' strategy to safeguard his own originality.[22]

ECLECTIC DOCTORS

We have thus seen that ancient thinkers from the sixth century BC to the second century AD had expressed distinct views on the process of appropriating and combining material from different predecessors. Depending on their particular circumstances and/or polemical targets, they treated it either as a sign of free and independent thought (Galen, Horace), or as a way of enriching and supporting their principal doctrinal commitments (Clement, Philodemus), or as a sign of confusion and incoherence (Epicurus, Theophrastus), or even of plagiarism (Heraclitus). But there is no other parallel for Potamo's choice of the word 'eclectic' to designate a new sect and define its agenda, with the exception of two medical handbooks that were at some stage incorporated into the *Corpus Galenicum*; they refer to a group of doctors who were explicitly called 'Eclectics' by some:

ἰατρικῆς αἱρέσεις αἱ πρῶται δύο Ἐμπειρικὴ καὶ Λογικὴ καὶ τρίτη Μεθοδική. δοκεῖ δὲ καὶ τετάρτην αἵρεσιν ἐξευρεῖν Ἀγαθῖνος ὁ Λακεδαιμόνιος, ἣν ὠνόμασεν Ἐπισυνθετικήν, ἔνιοι δὲ Ἐκλεκτικήν· ἕτεροι τὴν Ἑκτικήν.

The first two medical sects are the Empiricist and the Rationalist and the third the Methodist. It appears that Agathinus of Sparta came up with

[21] Granger 2004: 247.
[22] M. Schofield, 'Pythagoras the plagiarist' (unpublished paper delivered on Samos in July 2005). See also Mansfeld 1989, esp. 232, and Huffman 2008: 43–5.

a fourth sect, which he called Episynthetic ('Combining'), while certain people called it Eclectic; others the Hectic sect.[23] ([Gal.] *Def.Med.* XIX 353 K)

(Following a list of representatives from other sects) ἐγένοντο δέ τινες καὶ Ἐπισυνθετικοὶ, ὡς Λεωνίδης ὁ Ἀλεξανδρεύς. καὶ Ἐκλεκτικοί [ἐκλεκτοί Kühn], ὡς Ἀρχιγένης ὁ Ἀπαμεὺς τῆς Συρίας.

There were also some Episynthetic [doctors], such as Leonides of Alexandria. And some Eclectics, like Archigenes of Apameia in Syria. ([Gal.] *Int.* XIV 684 K)

These texts confirm that the term 'eclectic' was used in medical doxography from the first century AD,[24] and that some sort of alternative to the main medical sects was understood by it. They constitute our only evidence for the existence of an Episynthetic/Eclectic trend in medicine (with the exception of Caelius Aurelianus, see below), and as such the information is very limited. One would like to know, for instance, who are the 'certain people' who gave the name 'Eclectic' to Agathinus' sect and why. Moreover, the author of the *Definitions* does not seem to be very reliably informed (cf. '*it appears* that Agathinus . . . '), while the *Introduction* speaks of Episynthetics and Eclectics as different sects, rather than different names for the same sect. Both handbooks devote only a single brief reference to them, in contrast with their more detailed definition and discussion of the three main medical traditions (Dogmatism/Rationalism, Empiricism, Methodism). At the same time, both the *Definitions* and the *Introduction* have been characterised as dominated by an 'eclectic rationalism', in the sense that a rationalist framework is maintained and preferred ahead of Empiricist or Methodist alternatives, even though different alternatives are considered. Kollesch, however, has rightly argued for a clarifying distinction between this compilatory eclecticism of the handbooks and the synthetic/theoretical one of the doctors in question.[25]

[23] The translation of this last phrase is not straightforward, because the presence of the article suggests that τὴν Ἑκτικήν is a subject, not a predicate. Mauroudes 2000: 24 n. 95 wondered whether the article should be deleted. An alternative interpretation would be that in some quarters it was the Hectic sect (and not Agathinus' one) that was called 'Eclectic'.

[24] The *Definitions* is dated between the reigns of Nero and Marcus Aurelius, probably in the late first century AD. The *Introduction* has a *terminus post quem* in the reign of Trajan, due to references to Archigenes and Soranus; it also mentions Sextus Empiricus, whose date is notoriously difficult to pinpoint. Cf. Kollesch 1973: 60–6; Flemming 2000: 190, 192.

[25] Kollesch 1973: 71–3 and 89–92; cf. Flemming 2000: 191–3.

A combination of the evidence from the two passages cited above yields the following information: Agathinus of Sparta (first century AD, see below on his connection with Archigenes) introduced a sect, which he named Episynthetic. Leonides of Alexandria was an adherent of the same sect. 'Certain people' (ἔνιοι) identified Agathinus' sect with the Eclectic one, to which Archigenes belonged. Elsewhere the term Hectic was used, which is likely to be in reference to the Stoic 'hectic *pneuma*' (πνεῦμα ἑκτικόν), cf. [Gal.] *Int.* XIV 697 K (*SVF* II 716): πνεύματα δὲ κατὰ τοὺς παλαιοὺς δύο ἐστὶ, τό τε ψυχικὸν καὶ τὸ φυσικόν. οἱ δὲ Στωϊκοὶ καὶ τρίτον εἰσάγουσι τὸ ἑκτικὸν, ὃ καλοῦσιν ἕξιν ('there are two types of *pneuma* according to the ancients, the psychic and the physical one. The Stoics introduce a third, the 'hectic', which they call *hexis*'). This would be consistent with the Pneumatist connections of all these doctors, and it appears that one particular group applied the Stoic (rather than the 'ancient') distinction between types of *pneuma*, laying special emphasis on the hectic *pneuma* that holds the body together, in the same way it holds inanimate objects.[26]

Further evidence for a connection between Agathinus and Archigenes, consistent with the identification of the Episynthetic and Eclectic sects, is provided by the *Suda* (α 4107), which states that Archigenes was a pupil of Agathinus.[27] Leonides is mentioned with the epithet *Episyntheticus* by Caelius Aurelianus (*CP* 2.7), and it is possible that he too was an immediate pupil of Agathinus.[28] He is mentioned in the same breath as Archigenes, on the topic of breast cancer, by Aëtius of Amida, the sixth-century medical author (16.42).

[26] ἑκτικὸν μὲν οὖν ἐστι πνεῦμα, τὸ συνέχον τοὺς λίθους. φυσικὸν δὲ τὸ τρέφον τὰ ζῶα καὶ τὰ φυτά. ψυχικὸν δὲ τὸ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐμψύχων αἰσθητικά τε ποιοῦν τὰ ζῶα καὶ κινούμενα πᾶσαν κίνησιν. ἵδρυται δὲ ἐν τοῖς ζώοις· ἐκ γὰρ τῶν τριῶν συνέστηκε τὰ ζῶα. τὸ μὲν οὖν ψυχικὸν ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ κατῴκισται. τὸ δὲ φυσικὸν ἐν καρδίᾳ. τὸ δὲ ἑκτικὸν ἐν παντὶ τῷ σώματι ('The hectic pneuma, then, is the one that keeps rocks together. The physical is the one that nourishes animals and plants. And the psychic the one in animate beings, which gives animals their senses and their capacity to change and move in every way. It is present in animals, for animals are constituted from all three types of pneuma. The psychic pneuma is housed in the head, the physical in the heart, and the hectic in the whole body', [Gal.] *Int.* XIV 726 K).

[27] Ἀρχιγένης, Φιλίππου, Ἀπαμεὺς Συρίας, ἰατρὸς, μαθητὴς Ἀγαθίνου, ἐπὶ Τραϊανοῦ ἰατρεύσας ἐν Ῥώμῃ, βιοὺς ἔτη ξγ´ καὶ συγγράψας πολλὰ ἰατρικά τε καὶ φυσικά. Cf. also Aëtius, 3.172: Ἀρχιγένης δὲ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ διδάσκαλον Ἀγαθῖνον . . .

[28] Cf. Nutton, *DNP* s.v. 'Leonides' [3].

The fact that the same sect was known both as 'Episynthetic' and 'Eclectic' is an indication as to what this medical eclecticism may have amounted to, namely an attempted synthesis and combination of rival views from the other three systems.[29] Things are complicated somewhat by the fact that Galen associates the same doctors with the Pneumatist sect introduced by Athenaeus of Attaleia, who may have been a pupil of Posidonius (*conversatus enim fuit cum Posidonio*, 'for he kept company with Posidonius', Gal. *CC* 2.1); [30] Archigenes is mentioned as a Pneumatist even in the *Introduction*, a few pages after being called an Eclectic (xiv 699 K). According to Nutton, he advocated a 'mixture of Stoicism and Hellenistic dogmatic (or Hippocratic) medicine' and encouraged the historical study of all medical sects as a worthy intellectual pursuit.[31] Such a background is consistent with selective/synthetic tendencies on the part of Agathinus and Archigenes, who seem to have differentiated themselves from 'pure' Pneumatism. What is of particular interest is the nature of these doctors' eclecticism, as well as its underlying methodology: we have already seen that synthesis/combination was a prominent programmatic feature. In practice, it appears from a series of references in later medical texts that, while Athenaeus' Pneumatism was essentially a Stoic/Hippocratic blend, Agathinus and Archigenes were prepared to adopt recommendations from the Empiricist and Methodist camps, particularly in the field of therapeutics.[32] It would thus appear that medical eclecticism was driven by a particular criterion, namely that of optimal efficacy in therapeutic remedies.

These Eclectic doctors, therefore, emerged from a Pneumatist background to advocate a synthesis of existing ideas. Their emphasis

[29] The texts cited are the only occurrences of the adjective ἐπισυνθετικός in Greek. The adverb ἐπισυνθετικῶς is used by Sextus (*M.* 3.40–1) to describe a way of conceiving non-evident things (that is, by combining elements from evident things).

[30] Nutton suggests that the connection with Posidonius may amount to adherence to Posidonian doctrines through reading rather than direct apprenticeship, Nutton 2004: 202–3. On Athenaeus' connection with Agathinus and Archigenes cf. in particular Gal. *Diff.Puls.* viii 674 K: οὔτε Ἀρχιγένης οὔτε Ἀγαθῖνος οὔτε Μάγνος οὔτ' Ἀθήναιος οὔτε ἄλλος οὐδεὶς τῶν πνευματικῶν ἰατρῶν ἀληθὲς ὁμολογήσει; cf. *Dig.Puls.* viii 787 K; *Diff.Puls.* viii 754 K.

[31] Nutton 2004: 202–3; cf. Orib. *Medical Collections, CMG* 6.4.139, 141.

[32] See Gal. *Dig.Puls.* viii 771 K; Cael. Aur. *CP* 2.10; Nutton 2004: 203; Kollesch 1973: 89; all the references to Archigenes in connection with different sects are collected by Mauroudes 2000: 24–6.

was placed precisely on this synthesis, and it is more likely that the term Eclectic was a later characterisation, whereas they styled themselves Episynthetic. It is thus clear that eclecticism was a concept available for use in connection with this type of intellectual stance in the late first century AD, and it cannot be excluded that the additional name was given with the Eclectic philosophical sect in mind, which was established by Potamo of Alexandria towards the end of the first century BC, since this is the only other instance of an independent sect by that name.

Before we turn to look at Potamo in more detail, an issue that demands some attention is the fact that this unique philosophical school emerged in this particular place and time.[33] In the history of ancient philosophy, the first century BC is characterised more by the revival of ancient authorities than by the shaping of new directions, and it is therefore important to examine how an Eclectic sect might be related or juxtaposed to this trend. Moreover, Alexandria had not traditionally been the base for substantial philosophical activity in the Hellenistic period, which raises the question whether circumstances there might have been especially favourable or conducive to eclecticism in particular. I will therefore begin my survey with an attempt to shed some light on these historical questions concerning Potamo's enterprise, by examining the background formed by Alexandrian intellectual life in the first century BC, and the role of philosophy therein.

[33] For the debate on Potamo's date see pp. 68–72.

CHAPTER 2

Eclecticism and Alexandria in the first century BC

THE BACKGROUND

The capital of the Ptolemaic kingdom was the undisputed centre of intellectual life in the Hellenistic period. It benefited from active royal patronage that went beyond favouring gifted individuals in court, to include the establishment of permanent institutions devoted to learning and research. The achievements of scientists and literary scholars associated with the Museum and Library of Alexandria remained extremely influential for a long time after its heyday in the third century BC.[1] There is therefore a striking contrast with the field of philosophy, where Ptolemaic Alexandria does not have anything as remarkable to offer.

It does seem, however, that the initial set-up of Alexandria's centres of learning took place under some philosophical influence, notably from the Peripatos. Our sources speak of a close relationship between Demetrius of Phaleron and Ptolemy I Soter (D.L. 5.78; Ael. *VH* 3.17; Plu. *De exilio* 601F), and of attempts by that monarch to secure Theophrastus' services as tutor for his son. Eventually it was Strato of Lampsacus who was persuaded to come to Alexandria for a handsome reward (D.L. 5.37 and 58). There is further evidence for philosophers enjoying royal patronage under the early Ptolemies: Stilpo spent time in the court of Ptolemy I Soter, where he had the opportunity to humiliate Diodorus Cronus, according to an anecdote reported by Diogenes Laertius (D.L. 2.111–12; cf. 2.115; *Suda* σ 1114). The Epicurean Colotes addressed a philosophical treatise to Ptolemy Philadelphus (Plu. *Adv.Col.* 1107E), but it is not clear whether he

[1] See Fraser 1972; El-Abbadi 1990; Erskine 1995.

had any particular Alexandrian connections or whether this was in compliment for Ptolemy's support of Athens during the Chremonidean war in the third century BC. From Diogenes we also learn that in the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator Chrysippus turned down the lucrative prospect of a sojourn at Alexandria, while Sphaerus of Borysthenes went instead (D.L. 7.185, 177). All these passages speak of special invitations from the Ptolemies, aiming to bring to Alexandria philosophers that were already established elsewhere. Gradually the philosophical influence became less pronounced, as the distinguished position of tutor to the royal princes passed on to the great Alexandrian scholars such as Zenodotus, Eratosthenes and Aristarchus, often in conjunction with the librarianship.[2]

Meanwhile, Athens remained the only contender for centre of Hellenistic philosophy. All four major schools were organised in premises within Athenian territory, namely the gymnasia of the Academy and the Lyceum, the (Poikile) Stoa and Epicurus' Garden, and philosophers gathered there from all corners of the Greek (and occasionally non-Greek) world. This status quo started changing gradually towards the end of the second century BC, due partly to the rise of Rome as an attractive and lucrative cultural centre and partly to the private initiative of intellectuals such as Posidonius, who chose to remove to his teacher Panaetius' homeland of Rhodes.[3] We even know from Philodemus in his Σύνταξις τῶν φιλοσόφων ('Syntaxis of the philosophers', henceforth: *Syntaxis*)[4] that Zenodorus of Tyre, a pupil of Carneades, 'taught at Alexandria' (Ζηνόδωρος Τύριος κα[τ'] Ἀλεξάνδρειαν ἡγησά[μενος], *Index Academicorum* XXIII.2–3). There are some question marks over the interpretation of ἡγησάμενος, and whether it should lead us to postulate an Alexandrian 'branch' of the Academy led by Zenodorus.[5] Since we have no corroborating information on anything of the sort, it would be best to intepret Philodemus' words as a reference to a group of personal pupils that

[2] Fraser 1972: 308–9; the biographies preserved by the *Suda* often speak of an intellectual being 'summoned' or 'favoured' by the king.

[3] Sedley 2003: 32–3.

[4] The surviving parts of this work come from the sections on the 'History of the Academy' (*Index Academicorum*) and the 'History of the Stoa' (*Index Stoicorum*).

[5] Fraser 1972: II 707 n. 92 rejected the notion on palaeographical grounds and on the balance of historical probability, and was commended by Glucker. Dorandi 1991: 69–70 confirmed the reading, while acknowledging the historical problem.

Zenodorus 'led' (i.e. taught, with ἡγησάμενος closer to the sense of καθηγησάμενος), rather than to an official Academic annexe.

Eventually it was political developments during the turbulent years 88–86 BC that signalled the end of the almost exclusive Athenian dominance of the philosophical landscape. The political crisis that saw the tyrants Athenion and then Aristion in power, taking sides with Mithridates against Rome, culminated in a devastating siege and sack of the city by Sulla. Many philosophers left Athens during that period according to Cicero (*Brut.* 306), and Alexandria was one of the destinations where developments in philosophy were stimulated by this diaspora. Potamo's introduction of his new sect may be seen as one of the more indirect effects of this decentralisation that stimulated philosophical developments in Alexandria, which also benefited from sufficient spatial and temporal distance from the dominant and potentially domineering influence of the traditional schools.

ALEXANDRIAN INTELLECTUAL LIFE IN THE FIRST CENTURY BC

Egypt and Alexandria in the first century BC endured a prolonged period of political crisis, due to intense rivalries and competition for the throne among members of the Ptolemaic royal family. The fact that rival princes often had to rely on foreign support, and the financial compensations that this required, led in turn to a series of economic crises, as the kings sought to raise the necessary funds through heavy taxation. The beginning of the first century is marked by the feuding between Ptolemy IX Soter II and his brother Ptolemy X Alexander, which concluded with the second ascent of Ptolemy IX to the throne in 88 BC; the upshot was that the ousted Ptolemy X, in an effort to gain support for his attempts to capture Cyprus, pledged Egypt to Rome in his will, thus initiating a long period of insecurity and dependency for the Ptolemaic kingdom.

Such prolonged political and economic crises could not have any positive effect on cultural life, which had already been dealt a severe blow in the wake of another succession controversy, which resulted in Ptolemy VIII's revenge against his brother's and nephew's supporters, including many intellectuals, in the middle of the second century BC. The situation is described by Athenaeus, citing two

African historians,[6] as an enforced diaspora that benefited cities outside Alexandria:

οὐ γὰρ οἶδας ἱστοροῦντα Μενεκλέα τὸν Βαρκαῖον συγγραφέα ἔτι τε Ἄνδρωνα ἐν τοῖς Χρονικοῖς τὸν Ἀλεξανδρέα, ὅτι Ἀλεξανδρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ παιδεύσαντες πάντας τοὺς Ἕλληνας καὶ τοὺς βαρβάρους, ἐκλειπούσης ἤδη τῆς ἐγκυκλίου παιδείας διὰ τὰς γενομένας συνεχεῖς κινήσεις ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τοὺς Ἀλεξάνδρου διαδόχους χρόνοις. ἐγένετο οὖν ἀνανέωσις πάλιν παιδείας ἁπάσης κατὰ τὸν ἕβδομον βασιλεύσαντα Αἰγύπτου Πτολεμαῖον, τὸν κυρίως ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων καλούμενον Κακεργέτην. οὗτος γὰρ πολλοὺς τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων ἀποσφάξας, οὐκ ὀλίγους δὲ καὶ φυγαδεύσας τῶν κατὰ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἐφηβησάντων ἐποίησε πλήρεις τάς τε νήσους καὶ πόλεις ἀνδρῶν γραμματικῶν, φιλοσόφων, γεωμετρῶν, μουσικῶν, ζωγράφων, παιδοτριβῶν τε καὶ ἰατρῶν καὶ ἄλλων πολλῶν τεχνιτῶν· οἳ διὰ τὸ πένεσθαι διδάσκοντες ἃ ἠπίσταντο πολλοὺς κατεσκεύασαν ἄνδρας ἐλλογίμους.

For you are not aware that both Menecles the writer from Barce and Andron of Alexandria in his *Chronicles* relate that the Alexandrians are the ones who educated all the Greeks and the barbarians, when general education was failing because of the constant disturbances at the time of Alexander's successors. So there was a regeneration of all culture during the reign of the seventh[7] Ptolemy in Egypt, the one who is appropriately called 'Malefactor' by the Alexandrians. For he killed many Alexandrians, and sent many of those who had grown up with his brother into exile, and made the islands and cities full of grammarians, philosophers, geometers, musicians, painters, gymnasts and doctors and many other professionals; and they, by teaching what they knew because they were poor, produced many learned men. (Ath. 4.184b–c)

It is possible that Ptolemy VIII also installed a military officer as head of the Alexandrian Library: 'Cydas, one of the spearmen' (Κύδας ἐκ τῶν λογχοφόρων) figures in a list of librarians[8] immediately after the famous grammarian Aristarchus, who had been head librarian and tutor to the son of Ptolemy VI Philometor, but removed to Cyprus and remained there until the end of his life (*Suda* α 3892). The most

6 Menecles of Barce: second century BC, *FGrHist* 270 F9; Andron of Alexandria: not later than first century BC, *FGrHist* 246 F1.

7 Athenaeus and/or his source is not taking into account Ptolemy VII, who reigned for only a few days.

8 This list is preserved on a papyrus (*POxy* X 1241) among other lists of 'famous men' and other historical and mythological information in summary form. On this text see Pfeiffer 1968: 154; Van Rossum-Steenbeek 1997: 137–9 and 322–3.

illustrious of Aristarchus' pupils, Dionysius Thrax and Apollodorus of Athens, also left Alexandria for Rhodes and Pergamum respectively.

Nevertheless, the total decline of Alexandrian intellectual life was prevented thanks to some of Aristarchus' followers who remained behind, such as Ammonius, who flourished in the second half of the second century BC and is said to have taken over Aristarchus' teaching activities.[9] Further names that can be associated with this period include Chaeris (who worked on Homer, Pindar and Aristophanes)[10] and Zenodotus of Alexandria (whose output included a historical work and a reply to Plato's critique of the Homeric gods).[11]

As we move on to the first century BC, the information available on Alexandrian cultural life points to sustained and vibrant activity. It is also from this period that we have the most substantial evidence on the Museum and its function:

τῶν δὲ βασιλείων μέρος ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ Μουσεῖον, ἔχον περίπατον καὶ ἐξέδραν καὶ οἶκον μέγαν ἐν ᾧ τὸ συσσίτιον τῶν μετεχόντων τοῦ Μουσείου φιλολόγων ἀνδρῶν. ἔστι δὲ τῇ συνόδῳ ταύτῃ καὶ χρήματα κοινὰ καὶ ἱερεὺς ὁ ἐπὶ τῷ Μουσείῳ τεταγμένος τότε μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν βασιλέων νῦν δ' ὑπὸ Καίσαρος.

The Museum is also a part of the royal palaces; it has a public walk and an exhedra, and a large house in which the common meals of the learned men who are members of the Museum take place. This group have a common budget and there is a priest in charge of the Museum, appointed back then by the kings, but now by Caesar. (Str. 17.1.8)

From this it is clear that the Museum continued to operate as a scholarly community with a strong religious character, which enjoyed certain privileges but was also under the control of the Ptolemaic or (later) the Roman rulers. There is evidence of some favouritism in the royal interventions in the Library during the first century BC, with the appointment to the librarianship of Onesandros of Paphos, a priest favoured by Ptolemy IX (*OGIS* 172),[12] who does not seem to have been of any scholarly distinction. As far as the Library itself is concerned, we do not have any description comparable to Strabo's

[9] διεδέξατο τὴν σχολὴν Ἀριστάρχου, *Suda* α 1641; see also the scholion on *Il.* 10.397.

[10] See *DNP* s.v., vol. II, 1083.

[11] See *DNP* s.v. [4], vol. XII.2, 740.

[12] The inscription reads τεταγμένον δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείαι μεγάλης βυβλιοθήκης εὐνοίας [ἕνεκεν].

on the Museum, while there are reports that raise alarming questions about its fate in the second half of the first century BC. A number of sources speak of a devastating fire caused by Caesar's attack on the enemy fleet during the Alexandrian war,[13] but it is very hard to assess its impact with accuracy. Based on the available information, there does not appear to be any significant break or discontinuity in intellectual activity after 48 BC, and the voluminous work of scholars in the Augustan and Imperial periods shows that Alexandria remained rich in library resources and thus an attractive centre for research.[14] The Eclectic philosopher Potamo, therefore, would not have faced any lack in resources when he set out to assess the philosophical tradition and propose his own response, even though historical circumstances were not as favourable for intellectual enterprise as they had been during the third and second centuries BC. In what follows I will briefly survey the accomplishments of other intellectuals in Alexandria close to Potamo's time, particularly in two fields that often intersect with philosophy, namely medicine and grammar. This is intended to contribute towards an outline of the ways in which intellectual activity was pursued during the period in question, by highlighting emerging interdisciplinary trends and methods.

We may begin chronologically with Heraclides of Tarentum (fl. 100–65 BC)[15] in the field of medicine. He was trained by Mantias the Herophilean in Alexandria, but made his name as an Empiricist and was generally regarded as an innovator (Gal. *Comp.Med.Gen.* XIII 462 K; *Comp.Med.Loc.* XII 989 K).[16] Alongside his works on pharmacology and dietetics, he showed an interest in the history of medical science; he composed commentaries on the Hippocratic corpus and a work *On the Empiricist sect* (Gal. *Lib.Prop.* XIX 38 K). This type of 'medical historiography' was also practised in Alexandria by Apollonius Mys

[13] Luc., *Pharsalia* 10.486–505; Sen. *Dial.* 9.4–5; Plu. *Caes.* 49.6; Gell. 7.17; D.C. 42.38; Amm. Marc. 22.16.12–13.

[14] El-Abbadi 1990: 154–6. It is also reported that Antony offered about 200,000 books taken from Pergamum to Cleopatra (Plu. *Ant.* 58.9). See also Fraser 1972: 333–5.

[15] This is not, however, a universally accepted date; cf. Guardasole 1997: 23.

[16] The period of study with Mantias is the main argument in favour of Heraclides as a member of the Alexandrian intellectual scene. Guardasole 1997: 24–7 also cites some characteristics of his research method and his access to rare pharmacological works which would be difficult to find outside the Alexandrian Library.

and Heraclides of Erythrae, who both wrote *On the Herophilean sect* towards the end of the first century BC (Str. 14.1.34). Meanwhile, Apollonius of Citium engaged in exegetical activity, in a rare case of a surviving Hippocratic commentary from the period, comprising three books on Hippocrates' *On Joints*. The work is dedicated to Ptolemy XII Auletes or his brother,[17] and is a further testimony to the close interrelation between intellectual attainments and royal patronage. It appears, therefore, that the scholarly and bookish aspect of Greek medicine was particularly pronounced in Alexandria during the first century BC.[18] This impression is heightened by information about an intense polemic ongoing in the field of Hippocratic lexicography where, as we learn from Erotianus, Dioscurides Phacas (influential in the court of the last Ptolemies) wrote seven books against Bacchius of Tanagra (third century BC) and his epitomisers, while Apollonius of Citium countered Heraclides' three-book critique of Bacchius in eighteen books: 'even though Epicles of Crete produced an epitome of Bacchius' lexicon in . . . books [number missing from the texts], and Apollonius Ophis did the same thing, and Dioscurides Phacas refuted all these authors in seven books, while Apollonius of Citium wrote eighteen books against the Tarentine's three against Bacchius' (Erotianus 31–2, p. 5 Nachmanson).[19]

The tendency for 'sectarian historiography' and taking stock of the professional tradition was also evident in the field of grammar in first-century BC Alexandria. For instance, Tryphon (his date is given by the *Suda* τ 1115: 'he was active at the time of Augustus and earlier') focused exclusively on linguistic studies, reacting to his predecessors' observations on grammatical phenomena and organising them into a system, whereas before they had been made on an ad hoc basis to address particular problems of textual criticism etc. Tryphon does not seem to have written any commentaries or monographs on literary

[17] The introduction to the work begins as follows: θεωρῶ φιλιάτρως διακείμενόν σε, βασιλεῦ Πτολεμαῖε, καὶ ἡμᾶς δὲ σὺ ὁρῶν προθύμως τὰ ὑπό σου προσταχθέντα διαπρασσομένους.

[18] For this characteristic of Alexandrian medicine dating back to the fourth and third centuries BC see Vallance 2002.

[19] καίπερ Ἐπικλέους τοῦ Κρητὸς ἐπιτεμομένου τὰς Βακχείου λέξεις διὰ [. . .] συντάξεων, Ἀπολλωνίου τε τοῦ Ὄφεως ταὐτὸ ποιήσαντος, καὶ Διοσκορίδου τοῦ Φακᾶ πᾶσι τούτοις ἀντειπόντος δι' ἑπτὰ βιβλίων, Ἀπολλωνίου τε τοῦ Κιτιέως ὀκτωκαίδεκα πρὸς τὰ τοῦ Ταραντίνου τρία πρὸς Βακχεῖον διαγράψαντος.

criticism, and his work reveals a tendency to establish normative rules, detect analogical patterns and classify dialectal divergences.[20]

Another important grammarian of the first century BC who spent some time in Alexandria was Asclepiades of Myrlea.[21] His name appears in the scholia to various authors, mostly Pindar, and he had also written a work *On Nestor's Cup*, heavily used by Athenaeus in Book II of the *Deipnosophistae*. From Sextus Empiricus we learn about his theoretical reflections on the art of grammar, its definition and subdivisions, which he published in a work *On Grammar* (*M.* 1.47, 72–4, 252–3). Asclepiades was also interested in the history of his profession, and wrote a work Περὶ γραμματικῶν ('On grammarians/ men of letters'): it is cited at *Vita Arati* I, p. 6 Martin,[22] and the *Suda* (or rather its source) occasionally uses information from it on obscure personalities going back to the sixth century BC (ο 657; π 1888).

Didymus 'of brazen guts' (Χαλκέντερος) flourished in the first century BC until the Augustan period (*Suda* δ 873, 'he was active at the time of Antony and Cicero and until Augustus'). There is an anecdotal report that Didymus wrote so much (3,500 books!) that he forgot what he had written (Ath. 4.139c), and his work is in a sense a repository of all previous Alexandrian scholarship, because he collected and compiled from a vast range of different sources. He also engaged in grammatical 'doxography', producing his work on the Homeric text in the form of a report/review on Aristarchus, the great authority of the second century BC. Aristonicus (active in the same period, probably slightly earlier than Didymus) also contributed to the systematisation and clarification of his predecessors' views (particularly Aristarchus') by commenting on and explaining their use of critical signs.[23]

20 The fragments are collected in von Velsen 1853.

21 From the *Suda* article (α 4173) we learn that he also taught at Rome at the time of Pompey, but there seems to be some chronological confusion, because he is also synchronised with Ptolemy IV Philopator.

22 Martin 1974.

23 The main evidence for this is the following subscript, which appears at the end of the comments on each book of the *Iliad* in the 'Venetus A' manuscript: παράκειται τὰ Ἀριστονίκου σημεῖα καὶ τὰ Διδύμου Περὶ τῆς Ἀρισταρχείου διορθώσεως, τινὰ δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῆς Ἰλιακῆς προσῳδίας Ἡρωδιανοῦ καὶ τοῦ Νικάνορος Περὶ Ὁμηρικῆς στιγμῆς ('In the margins may be found Aristonicus' *Signs* and Didymus' *On the Aristarchean Recension*, as well as selections from Herodian's *Iliadic Prosody* and from Nicanor's *On Homeric Punctuation*'). Erbse in his edition of the Homeric scholia has painstakingly identified which remarks come from Didymus, which from Aristonicus etc.

To sum up, from this information on areas of intellectual life that had been traditionally flourishing in Alexandria, one gets a picture of sustained activity and productivity. But there is also an impression of an 'epigone' feeling in the output of these intellectuals, an output that lacked the pioneering character of the first editions of Homer and the medical innovations of Erasistratus and Herophilus. It is most in evidence when one considers how much of the work done in the fields of medicine and grammar consisted in a scholarly engagement with a tradition of predecessors in the same field, whether the aim was historiographical, exegetical or polemical. This does not necessarily mean that there was inferior talent or capacities in the first century BC; rather, a process of codification and systematisation of past achievements was prioritised, perhaps due to an increasing consciousness of the weight of tradition. The importance and interest of these developments that originated in Alexandria lies in their lasting influence on the ways in which subsequent societies to this day think about and organise/systematise the intellectual traditions of the past.

PHILOSOPHY IN ALEXANDRIA

This is the atmosphere within which developments in Alexandrian philosophy took place in the first century BC. It is among the purposes of the present study to examine whether, and in what ways, philosophy 'fits into' Alexandrian intellectual life, and to what extent it displays similar trends and characteristics. One of the main problems related to this question is the apparent absence of any noteworthy indigenous philosophical activity in the third and second centuries, already remarked on above. This need not suggest a complete lack of interest in matters related to philosophy among prominent Alexandrian intellectuals.

In fact, a fruitful tradition was initiated by Callimachus of Cyrene (mid third century BC), one of the most important Hellenistic poets, who was active in the Library (even though there is no information that he ever actually became librarian). Callimachus produced 120 books of *Lists of Those Who Distinguished themselves in All Branches of Learning, and their Writings* (Πίνακες τῶν ἐν πάσῃ παιδείᾳ διαλαμψάντων, καὶ ὧν συνέγραψαν, *Suda* κ 227), which gave rise to a flourishing production of biographical surveys on philosophers,

often accompanied by lists of their works. Hermippus of Smyrna, a pupil of Callimachus' (called 'Callimachean' by Athenaeus, *FGrHist* 1026 T2) who was also associated with the Peripatetic tradition (in St Jerome, *FGrHist* 1026 T1), wrote a collection of *Lives* which was used by Diogenes Laertius for information on Socrates (2.38), Plato (8.85), Arcesilaus (4.44–5) and others. It appears that some philosophers were the subject of separate works by Hermippus: Diogenes cites the second book of Hermippus' *On Pythagoras* (8.10), Athenaeus draws on book one of his *On Aristotle* (Ath. 13.589c), and there was probably a separate work on Theophrastus, too.[24] Hermippus' catalogue of Theophrastus' works, which did not include his *Metaphysics*,[25] may be connected with his biographical production, and it also falls within the range of interests and the scholarly practice of cataloguing books associated with the Callimachean tradition.

This information, combined with Diogenes' confirmed use of Hermippus for biographical details, makes it tempting to suggest that the list of Theophrastus' works found in Diogenes (5.42–50), but also those for Aristotle (5.22–7) and other philosophers, come from Hermippus, and thus reflect the presence of these books in the Alexandrian Library. This is not, however, an uncontroversial matter, and recently Bollansée has cast doubt on Hermippus' paternity, citing the lack of any explicit evidence for the provenance of Diogenes' catalogues, which leaves open the possibility that they 'could have been composed in one of the other great Hellenistic centres of book-collecting, learning and research like Pergamon or Rhodos'.[26] In any case, the attested information that Hermippus had produced a *Pinax* of Theophrastus' works is suggestive in its own right (irrespective of any link to the surviving lists in Diogenes) and shows that philosophical works were available in Alexandria and that work was done on them by scholars continuing Callimachus' ambitious project. In this connection we should also mention the view of Aristophanes

[24] Hermippus' biographical interests were not limited to philosophers; cf. *FGrHist* 1026 F1–8 (*On Lawgivers*); F42–54 (*On Isocrates* and *On the Pupils of Isocrates*); F55 (*On Hipponax*).

[25] This information is found in a note appearing in some manuscripts at the end of Thphr. *Metaph.* 12a4–b4: τοῦτο τὸ βιβλίον Ἀνδρόνικος μὲν καὶ Ἕρμιππος ἀγνοοῦσιν, οὐδὲ γὰρ μνείαν αὐτοῦ ὅλως πεποίηνται ἐν τῇ ἀναγραφῇ τῶν Θεοφράστου βιβλίων (*FGrHist* 1026 T20).

[26] Bollansée 1999: 243. See in general 233–43.

of Byzantium (fl. 200 BC, head librarian and influential editor of Homer) that Plato's dialogues should be arranged in trilogies (D.L. 3.61, Fr. 403 Slater). This has been taken to imply an Alexandrian edition of Plato's works, but Pfeiffer and others associated Aristophanes' remarks with his work in response to Callimachus' *Pinakes* (Πρὸς τοὺς Καλλιμάχου Πίνακας, Frs. 368–9 Slater).[27] Once again, however, this shows that philosophical texts and their arrangement were among the issues stirring the interest of scholars in the Alexandrian Library. We also know that Aristophanes read works by Epicurus and made an unfavourable comment on his idiosyncratic style (D.L. 10.13, Fr. 404 Slater).

Returning to the theme of biography, reference must be made to Sotion (fl. 200–170 BC), who is called 'Alexandrian' by Athenaeus (8.336d). Sotion's work, which is cited twenty-one times by Diogenes Laertius, was entitled Διαδοχαὶ τῶν φιλοσόφων ('Successions of the philosophers'), and was geared towards constructing a continuous history of philosophy by connecting one philosopher to another through (often arbitrarily postulated) successive teacher–pupil relationships.[28] This highlights a further aspect of Alexandrian dealings with philosophers and philosophy, namely an effort to organise and correlate the available material into a coherent historical narrative. Finally, Apollodorus of Athens (fl. 140 BC), who had been a pupil of the Stoic Diogenes of Babylon before coming to Alexandria to study with Aristarchus (*FGrHist* 244 T2), collected much chronological information on the dates of birth, death and other important events in the lives of many philosophers in his Χρονικά ('Chronology'), which was heavily used by Diogenes Laertius.

In summary, then, Alexandrian interest in philosophy in the third and second centuries BC formed part of the wider interests of the leading scholars in the history of literature and classification of texts, with the resulting focus on biography and bibliography. Philosophers were of interest as literary authors and distinguished figures of the past, and not so much for their theoretical opinions, which do not seem to have attracted as much attention. This impression might have been different if more were known from the work of Eratosthenes (fl. 240 BC), who had studied in Athens and admired Arcesilaus

[27] Pfeiffer 1968: 196–7. [28] Mejer 1978: 63.

and Aristo of Chios. But this would be merely an exception to the rule, and moreover Eratosthenes' philosophical attempts were open to criticism on the grounds of amateurism (Str. 1.2.2). The reasons behind the lack of any more substantial philosophical activity were traced by Fraser to the prestige of the established philosophical schools of Athens, but also to a reluctance on the part of philosophers to settle in the Ptolemaic court, stemming from a disapproval of the particular lifestyle offered by Ptolemaic patronage and the absolutism of the Ptolemies.[29] Of these two suggestions, the one involving the attractive power of the main Athenian schools is more persuasive and perhaps sufficient on its own.

Fraser in his account of philosophy in Alexandria also comments on the change that came about in the first century BC. He identifies 'systematic philosophy' and the 'tendency of the schools to blend' as its major characteristics (he also refers to the impact of the dispersal of intellectuals in the wake of the Mithridatic war).[30] He states that 'this *eclecticism* is particularly an Alexandrian phenomenon' (emphasis added) and proceeds to tell its story as a continuous process from Antiochus of Ascalon down to Potamo and Arius Didymus, whom he calls 'the final representatives of Antiochus' teaching'. According to Fraser, this teaching was based upon an 'eclectic Dogmatism that became the recognised form of Academic philosophy in Alexandria'.[31] Before Fraser, several scholars since the nineteenth century had postulated along similar lines an 'Antiochean school' of philosophy in Alexandria, whose doctrines embodied the 'traditions' of eclecticism and eventually Platonism.[32] All such suggestions were strongly opposed by Glucker, who emphasised the lack of any explicit evidence pointing to a historical link between Antiochus and Potamo (and Arius Didymus), such as the continuing operation of a school.[33]

Heeding Glucker's recommendations of caution, in what follows I will provide a review of what is known about philosophical activity in Alexandria from the time of Antiochus to that of Potamo. My aim is not so much to reopen the question of a specific historical connection beween the former and the latter (Glucker and Barnes have shown that there is not enough evidence for such an enterprise), but to

[29] Fraser 1972: 484–5. [30] Fraser 1972: 485–6. [31] Fraser 1972: 486, 490, 488.
[32] For references see Glucker 1978: 90–1; Barnes 1989: 57. [33] Glucker 1978: 90–7.

construct a picture of Alexandrian philosophy in the first century BC, which may be compared to what was going on earlier and to contemporary developments in other disciplines. As a result, it will be possible to examine Potamo and his philosophy against a wider intellectual background, and not simply in terms of his dependence (or lack thereof) on alleged pre-existing eclectic trends.

ANTIOCHUS OF ASCALON

The first philosophical presence of note in Alexandria during the first century BC was that of Antiochus of Ascalon, who arrived there accompanying the Roman quaestor Lucullus on a diplomatic mission. It is unclear where and when Lucullus met and formed a close friendship with Antiochus: some prominent Athenians, including Antiochus' teacher Philo of Larissa, had fled to Rome to avoid the troubles of the Mithridatic war in 88 BC,[34] but there is no firm indication as to whether Antiochus was among them. In any case, the resulting relationship between Antiochus and Lucullus is of importance, because it was as part of Lucullus' entourage that Antiochus came to Alexandria in 87/86 BC (Cic. *Luc.* 4 and 11). Antiochus' presence and his role within this entourage is the subject of some debate. Keaveney, who describes Antiochus' trip as 'a slightly surreal touch', sees in it an example of Lucullus' devotion to philosophy and appreciation of the comfort it can provide, as well as a demonstration of affection and loyalty on Antiochus' part.[35] This is an instance of the role of philosophic adviser, bound to a Roman nobleman through ties of patronage. Glucker, on the other hand, questioned Lucullus' interest in philosophy and proposed a role for Antiochus that was more strongly focused on the political side of things, claiming that he was involved in Lucullus' diplomatic campaign as an interpreter, 'mouthpiece and go-between' during the necessary negotiations with the Greeks in the East.[36] These issues are important because they have a bearing upon the nature of Antiochus' activities while in Alexandria. The more one emphasises his political role the less scope, it seems,

[34] *cum princeps Academiae Philo cum Atheniensium optumatibus Mithridatico bello domo profugisset Romamque venisset* (Cic. *Brut.* 306).

[35] Keaveney 1992: 21.

[36] Glucker 1978: 23–6.

is left for philosophical teaching and for any impact upon Alexandrian intellectual life. There is, however, biographical information on Antiochus suggesting that this need not be the case: Blank's recent re-examination of *PHerc*. 1021, preserving Philodemus' biography of Antiochus within his *Syntaxis*, has confirmed the readings suggesting that Antiochus spent considerable periods of time throughout his life on political and ambassadorial missions, without this hindering his philosophical attainments.[37] Thus we should not conclude that Antiochus did not engage in serious philosophical teaching in Alexandria on the grounds that he was occupied in Lucullus' diplomatic mission, because the two were not mutually exclusive.

In fact, our only information on events during Antiochus' sojourn at Alexandria comes from Cicero and is of a philosophical nature. It involves the unfolding of one of the most famous controversies of the late Academy. When Antiochus arrived with Lucullus, an Academic colleague of his, Heraclitus of Tyre, was already there: *erat iam antea Alexandriae familiaris Antiochi Heraclitus Tyrius* ('Antiochus' friend, Heraclitus of Tyre, was already there in Alexandria', *Luc*. 11). He had clearly come from Athens (where he had been a pupil of Clitomachus and Philo, the last two known heads of the Academy in Athens: *qui et Clitomachum multos annos et Philonem audierat*, *Luc*. 11; *Index Ac*. XXXIV.16), probably in the fallout of the political crisis there, but nothing is known about his reasons for choosing Alexandria in particular.[38] As Cicero's Lucullus informs us, Antiochus had frequent meetings with this Heraclitus, and their discussions were characterised by calm and civilised disagreement: *cum quo* [sc. *Heraclito*] *Antiochum saepe disputantem audiebam, sed utrumque leniter* ('I often listened to Antiochus' debates with him, but they both argued mildly', *Luc*. 11; these early disagreements can be seen as an indication that Antiochus had already distanced himself from the positions of Clitomachus and Philo before arriving in Alexandria).

[37] διεγ̣[έν]ετο | . . . . . .] τὸ πλ̣εῖστ[ον] τοῦ | βί̣[ου] πρεσβεύ̣ων Ἀ̣[θή]νη|θε̣ν̣ [ε]ἴ̣ς τε Ῥώμη[ν κ]αὶ̣ πρὸς | τοὺ̣ς̣ [ἐ̣]ν ταῖς ἐπαρχε̣[ίαι]ς στρα|τηγ̣ούς. (*Index Ac*. XXXIV.34–9). Cf. Blank 2007: 89–90. For all references to the text of Philodemus' Life of Antiochus I am following the latest readings by Blank.

[38] One could, for instance, speculate that his choice had something to do with the circle of his older compatriot, Zenodorus of Tyre (cf. above pp. 26–7).

The calm atmosphere was shaken by the arrival from Rome of a two-volume work by Philo, which Antiochus found extremely controversial and felt the need to refute in writing. The episode, apart from its importance in the history of the late Academy, is also an interesting example of interaction and influence across cultural centres: either through the general book trade or through the travels of certain individuals,[39] events at Rome were able to make an impact and stir discussion and reaction as far away as Alexandria. Cicero gives a fairly clear picture of the circumstances of these discussions in the Egyptian capital: Antiochus and Heraclitus were engaged in earnest debate, Heraclitus arguing against Antiochus and Antiochus against the Academics (*Heraclitum studiose audirem contra Antiochum disserentem et item Antiochum contra Academicos*, *Luc.* 12). Presumably these arguments were more animated than their exchanges before the arrival of Philo's books – the *leniter* of *Luc.* 11 does not apply any more.

In the context of an inquiry into philosophical activity in Alexandria, the most pressing questions concern the setting and audience of these debates, in order to estimate whether there could have been any impact of this Academic controversy upon a wider circle of locals. Unfortunately Cicero is not very helpful here: the setting probably was Lucullus' lodgings in the royal palace (Plu. *Luc.* 2.5), where the two parties were 'summoned' to argue their case.[40] But we must remember that the Museum also formed part of the royal complex (cf. Strabo 17.1.8, cited above), therefore interaction with local intellectuals is not out of the question, even though we are in the dark as to their identity. Cicero's phrase *adhibito Heraclito doctisque compluribus* ('having called upon Heraclitus and many other learned men', *Luc.* 12) implies a sizeable group, but only three further participants are named: they were Antiochus' brother Aristus, Aristo and Dio.[41]

39 If we take the view that it was the Selii and Tetrilius Rogus that brought Philo's work to Alexandria, cf. *Luc.* 11.

40 Or the participants were 'entertained' by Lucullus, if we do not take *adhibeo* in *adhibito Heraclito* at *Luc.* 12 as a legal metaphor. It would then mean either 'invite' (*OLD* s.v. 4) or 'call upon' (someone's expertise) (*OLD* s.v. 5).

41 Perhaps the group also included the Roman friends of Lucullus, Publius and Gaius Selius and Tetrilius Rogus, mentioned at *Luc.* 11 (see above n. 39).

This is all Cicero reveals about the Alexandrian 'circle' around Antiochus, adding that discussions were particularly lengthy (cf. *multum temporis in ista una disputatione consumpsimus*, 'we spent a lot of time on just that one debate', *Luc.* 12; *erat de hac una re unius diei disputatio*, 'there was a whole day's discussion about this one matter [false sense-impressions]', *Luc.* 49). What did take place, according to Cicero, was a series of lively discussions, which may or may not have attracted wider attention, in the course of a relatively brief sojourn. Antiochus' impact on Alexandrian intellectual life will have to be sought in the impressions made upon the 'many learned men', assuming the group included some locals and not just temporary refugees from Athens. Therefore, the presupposition of a continuing school cannot be used to allow us to assume any Antiochean influence in the thought of later Alexandrians; any such influences may only be connected to his performances while visiting with Lucullus, or to individuals for whom we have reliable evidence that they were his pupils.

ANTIOCHUS' PUPILS AND PHILODEMUS

A reasonable step, then, would be to examine the activity of Antiochus' pupils and associates, particularly Aristo and Dio, about whom we know that they were native Alexandrians. Cicero's description *quibus ille secundum fratrem plurimum tribuebat* ('whom he held in the highest esteem after his brother', *Luc.* 12) suggests a close familiarity with Antiochus predating his visit to Alexandria, with the implication that Aristo and Dio were previously in Athens. Perhaps they, along with Aristus, formed the group of Antiochus' 'personal' pupils to which Cicero alludes at *Luc.* 69: *numquam a Philone discessit, nisi postea quam ipse coepit qui se audirent habere* ('he never seceded from Philo, except after he began to have his own audience').

What can one make, then, of the presence of these men at Alexandria, precisely at the time of Antiochus' mission there with Lucullus? It is possible that Aristo and Dio had simply returned to their homeland before or during the troubles at Athens, and that their teacher's mission to the same city was a happy coincidence. This of course does not apply to Aristus, so Glucker entertains the possibility that Lucullus had befriended the entire group, and Brittain is in favour

of this solution.[42] The attendance of Antiochus' close circle of pupils in Lucullus' entourage would indicate that philosophical discussion was perhaps of more importance during their stay in Alexandria than Glucker would like to allow.

We are not told anything about the exact role and degree of participation of Aristus, Aristo and Dio in the Alexandrian debate between Antiochus and Heraclitus. Other information on them is not extensive either. From Philodemus' *Syntaxis* we learn that Aristus continued his brother's school (see below). Aristus seems to have been a good-natured and able man who took up his brother's teachings without much adventure or originality. A passage at *Tusc.* 5.21–2, where the view that there are good things besides virtue is ascribed to both Aristus and Antiochus, suggests that Aristus held and defended his brother's positions; in this context, Cicero is reminiscing about a debate in Athens where Aristus reproduced ideas found in Antiochus' writings. In any case, Aristus' activity after Antiochus' death was centred in Athens, and we do not know of any travel after the visit to Alexandria in Lucullus' time, unless we suppose that he followed Brutus in some of his travels, since we know that he was his preferred philosophical companion (συμβιωτής).[43]

Moving on to Aristo and Dio, the native Alexandrians, we must first address an issue arising from Philodemus' *Syntaxis*, and in particular from the wording at *Index Ac.* xxxv.2–10:

τὴν δὲ δι|ατριβὴν αὐτοῦ διεδέξατο | ἀδελφὸς ὢν κ̣αὶ μαθητὴς | Ἄριστος, ἀκουστὰς δὲ καίπερ | ἀσχολούμενο̣ς ἔσχε πλεί|ους καὶ δὴ καὶ σ̣υ̣νήθεις ἡ|μῶν Ἀρίστωνά τε καὶ Δίω|να Ἀλεξανδρεῖς καὶ Κρά|τιππον Περγαμηνόν.

And his school passed on to Aristus who was his brother and pupil; he had many students even though he was a busy man, and among them in particular my friends Aristo and Dio from Alexandria and Cratippus of Pergamum.

This was widely taken to imply that Aristo, Dio and Cratippus were pupils of Aristus. Since Cicero's testimony (*Luc.* 12, mentioned above) speaks in favour of Aristo and Dio as esteemed pupils of Antiochus,

[42] Glucker 1978: 21; cf. Brittain 2001: 56: 'The audience he has there appears to be well-established . . . and Antiochus seems to have brought it with him.'

[43] See Cic. *Brut.* 332; Plu. *Brut.* 2; and Glucker 1978: 112–13.

one might suppose that these followers were 'passed on' from one brother to the other with the leadership of the school. However, as Puglia rightly pointed out, this is not what Philodemus says; it makes better sense if the subject of 'he had' is the general subject of the Life. Antiochus is the one who was 'a busy man', and his frequent absences on embassies and his duties with Lucullus are mentioned in the immediately preceding sentence, XXXIV.35–9.[44] A further advantage of this reading (as pointed out by Puglia) is that it establishes a pattern for the last two full Lives of Philodemus' history of the Academy (Philo and Antiochus), whereby biographical details are followed by information on the philosopher's succession, and then by a list of his other pupils.[45]

Philodemus knew Antiochus and his Alexandrian pupils personally (more on this below), and has important information on their subsequent careers and diverging paths: ὧ[ν | Ἀρίστων [μὲν] καὶ Κράτ[ιπ|πος ε.[. . . . . .]να[. . . . . . α]|κούσαντε[ς] ζῆλοṿ ε[. . . . . .]| ἐγένοντọ Περιπạτ̣η[τι|κοὶ Δ[ί]ωṿ δὲ τῆς ἀρ[χ]ạία[ς Ἀ|καδη̣μείας ('of these three Aristo and Cratippus . . . heard . . . eager to emulate . . . became Peripatetics, while Dio [was a member of] the Old Academy', XXXV.10–16, immediately following from the passage cited above). 'Old Academy' was the name of Antiochus' school (see Cic. *Luc.* 70; *Ac.* 1.13; *Brut.* 232; Plu. *Luc.* 42.2–4), to which Dio remained loyal. Aristo is now linked with Cratippus, who was later held in high esteem as a Peripatetic by Cicero, but who is not in any way connected with Alexandria. The date of their departure from the (Old) Academy is uncertain, but is generally thought to be after Antiochus' death. The change has been connected with the excitement caused by the Aristotelian revival that may have been sparked by Apellicon's purchase of valuable manuscripts from Scepsis some time before Sulla's siege of Athens.[46] Even after Sulla's

[44] Puglia 2000: 25–6; thus also Barnes 1989: 59. This interpretation was already hinted at by Glucker 1978: 95 n. 257.

[45] Puglia 2000: 26; cf. Blank 2007: 89. In Philo's case the succession is discussed in the problematic lines XXXIV.2–6 (corresponding to XXXV.2–5 for Antiochus), while the list of pupils at XXXIV.6–16 (corresponding to XXXV.5–16) is appropriate for Philo, especially since it contains Heraclitus (XXXIV.16), who we know had studied with him (Cic. *Luc.* 11).

[46] Strabo 13.1.54; Strabo did not think much of Apellicon's editorial initiative: ἐξέδωκεν ἁμαρτάδων πλήρη τὰ βιβλία [. . .] τοῖς δ' ὕστερον, ἀφ' οὗ τὰ βιβλία ταῦτα προῆλθεν, ἄμεινον μὲν ἐκείνων φιλοσοφεῖν καὶ ἀριστοτελίζειν, ἀναγκάζεσθαι μέντοι τὰ πολλὰ εἰκότα λέγειν διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν.

confiscation of Apellicon's library the momentum was not curbed among the Peripatetics, and we hear of continued exegetical and editorial activity, the most celebrated figure being Andronicus of Rhodes.[47]

Puglia sought to identify Aristo and Cratippus' conversion to the Peripatos as the result of a direct influence from a particular philosopher, based on the participle of ἀκούω at *Index Ac.* xxxv.13, which Puglia supplements as δια]κούσα[ντες, 'having heard' (Blank's latest reading confirms that we are dealing with a participle). Moreover, Puglia suggests an identification of this philosopher with Xenarchus of Seleuceia because: (i) he was a prominent Peripatetic of the early first century BC; (ii) his dates are compatible with those of Aristo and Cratippus; (iii) he is the only Peripatetic of the period whose name fits the surviving letters at xxxv.12.[48] It is true that Puglia's reconstruction is conjectural and cannot be supported by further positive evidence, but the name of some teacher who prompted Aristo and Cratippus towards the Peripatos would make good sense here. This is indicated in Blank's translation, too: 'Aristo and Cratippus [heard . . . and being] eager to emulate became Peripatetics'.[49]

Aristo and Cratippus are mentioned in tandem by Aelian too, as advisers to Caesar and Pompey respectively:

οὐκ ἀπηξίου Καῖσαρ ἐπὶ τὰς Ἀρίστωνος θύρας φοιτᾶν, Πομπήιος δὲ ἐπὶ τὰς Κρατίππου. οὐ γὰρ ἐπεὶ μέγα ἐδύναντο ὑπερεφρόνουν τῶν τὰ μέγιστα αὐτοὺς ὀνῆσαι δυναμένων, ἀλλ' ἐδέοντο αὐτῶν, καίτοι τοσοῦτοι ὄντες τὴν ἀξίωσιν. οὐ γὰρ ἄρχειν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀλλὰ καλῶς ἄρχειν ἐβούλοντο.

Caesar was not too proud to visit Aristo regularly, and Pompey Cratippus. Their great power did not cause them to despise men capable of conferring the greatest benefits on them. Instead, despite their standing, they came with a request. Their wish evidently was not to govern but to govern well. (Ael. *VH* 7.21, transl. Wilson, modified)

[47] There are still question marks over any direct impact of Andronicus' work on Aristo and Cratippus; Moraux 1973 and Gottschalk 1987 are in favour of an early date for the edition (in the 60s BC) and locate Andronicus' activity at Athens.

[48] Puglia 1998a: 148. The sentence as reconstructed by Puglia 2000: 27 reads as follows: ἐπ[εὶ Ξε]νά[ρχου δια]κούσα[ν]τ̣ε̣[ς] ζῆλον ἔ[σχον], ἐγένοντο etc. The supplement is adopted by Sharples 2010: 12.

[49] Blank, however, thinks that the teacher who inspired Aristo and Cratippus to become Peripatetics might have been Antiochus himself; cf. his discussion in Blank 2007: 92 n. 24.

If this deferential report is to be trusted, it is further evidence for the widespread practice of powerful Romans who enjoyed the company of Greek philosophers in an advisory role, in return for protection and patronage. Caesar may have met Aristo in Alexandria, because according to Appian (*Civ.* 2.89) he attended public lectures by philosophers just before the outbreak of the Alexandrian war in 48 BC.[50]

It is only as a Peripatetic that Aristo is known outside Cicero and Philodemus (and Aelian does not offer any information on his affiliation). Diogenes Laertius mentions 'sixth, a Peripatetic philosopher from Alexandria' in a list of authors named Aristo (ἕκτος Ἀλεξανδρεὺς Περιπατητικός, 7.164). More information can be found in Simplicius, who mentions Aristo as one of the early commentators on Aristotle's *Categories*: οὗτοι τοὺς παλαιοὺς τῶν Κατηγοριῶν ἐξηγητὰς αἰτιῶνται, Βόηθον καὶ Ἀρίστωνα καὶ Ἀνδρόνικον καὶ Εὔδωρον καὶ Ἀθηνόδωρον ('they [*sc.* Achaicus and Sotion] criticise the old commentators on the *Categories*, Boethus and Aristo and Andronicus and Eudorus and Athenodorus', Simp. *In Cat.* 159.31–2 = Test. 5 Mariotti). Aristo's work on the *Categories* appears to have been very much in the same vein as that of Andronicus and Boethus, displaying a concern about vague or loose expressions and suggesting changes of wording aiming at formal correctness:[51]

τὰ γὰρ πρός τι ὁριζόμενος οἷς τὸ εἶναι, φησίν, ταὐτόν ἐστιν τῷ πρός τί πως ἔχειν. ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀσαφῆ τὴν ἀπόδοσιν ἐποιήσατο, ὡς καὶ Βοήθῳ καὶ Ἀρίστωνι δοκεῖ, ὅπερ καὶ αὐτὸ κακία ὁρισμοῦ ἐστιν, διόπερ ὁ Ἀρίστων ὡς ἐπὶ σαφέστερον μεταλαμβάνων 'τὰ πρός τί πως ἔχοντα, φησίν, ταῦτά ἐστιν, οἷς τὸ εἶναι ταὐτόν ἐστιν τῷ πῶς ἔχειν πρὸς ἕτερον'· [καὶ] οὕτως δὲ καὶ Ἀνδρόνικος ἀποδίδωσιν.

In his definition of relative terms he says that [they are those things] whose essence is identical with being somehow related to something [Arist. *Cat.* 8a31–2]. But the definition is vague, in the opinion of both Boethus and Aristo, which is one of the faults of definitions, and this is why Aristo made some changes for clarification and said: 'things that are relatively disposed are those whose essence is identical with being somehow related to something else'. Andronicus too gives the same definition. (Simp. *In Cat.* 201.35–202.4 = Fr. 3 Mariotti)

[50] See Rawson 1989: 240–2.

[51] Cf. Gottschalk 1987: 1105–6 with n. 138. Mariotti detects in all this the scholastic and not very in-depth tactics of typical commentators, cf. Mariotti 1966: 56 and *passim*.

The same definition is cited as 'the definition of Aristo and Andronicus' (ὁ Ἀρίστωνος καὶ Ἀνδρονίκου [*sc.* ὁρισμός] a few lines later (203.4–5). Aristo seems to have been particularly puzzled by the relation of whole and part in the category of relatives, and by the ambiguity in expressions for correlatives such as 'world' and 'what is in the world' (κόσμος, τὸ ἐν κόσμῳ):

ὁ δὲ Ἀρίστων τοιαύτην ἀπορίαν τοῖς εἰρημένοις ἐπάγει· 'εἰ πᾶν πρός τι ὡς πρὸς ἕτερόν τι ἀπολελυμένον ἑαυτοῦ πρός τι λέγεται, οἷον ὁ πατὴρ πρὸς υἱόν, ὁ δὲ κόσμος οὐδὲν ἀπολελυμένον ἑαυτοῦ ἔχει (οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν τι τοῦ κόσμου ἐκτός), οὐκ ἔσται πρός τι ὁ κόσμος. καίτοι τῶν πρός τί ἐστιν· ὡς γὰρ τὸ πτερὸν πτερωτοῦ πτερόν, οὕτως καὶ τὸ ἐν κόσμῳ κοσμωτοῦ καὶ τὸ ἐν γῇ γεωτοῦ καὶ τὸ ἐν ἀέρι ἀερωτοῦ.'

Aristo introduces the following query about what has been said: 'If every relative term is spoken of as relative to something else that is separate from itself, like the father to the son, but the world has nothing separate from it (for there is not anything outside the world), the world will not be a relative; yet it does belong to relatives; for just like the wing is the wing of the winged [cf. Arist. *Cat.* 7a4], in the same way that which is in the world is of the world-ed, and that which is in earth is of the earth-ed, and that which is in air is of the air-ed.' (Simp. *In Cat.* 188.30–6 = Fr. 2 Mariotti)

Aristo wanted to draw attention to some problems that will arise if one applies relative terms (such as father–son) only to objects that are fully distinct from each other. But he tried to apply Aristotle's method of coining reversible terms to illustrate correlatives, and ended up with bizarre results, particularly because he used the whole rather than the part as his basis: Aristotle's terms 'winged, ruddered, headed' (πτερωτόν, πηδαλιωτόν, κεφαλωτόν) etc. make sense if rendered 'having wings, helm, head' etc. (or 'of that-which-has-wings' etc. in the genitive). By constrast, Aristo's 'of that-which-has-world' (κοσμωτοῦ) does not make sense.[52]

The passages from Simplicius cited above could be derived either from a running commentary by Aristo on the *Categories* or from a monograph on the category of relatives (because there are no references to Aristo in connection with any other category).[53] He is also said to have been among those who recognised the subaltern moods of the categorical syllogism, in addition to the scheme set out

[52] Moraux 1973: 184; Gottschalk 1987: 1110. [53] Moraux 1973: 182–3.

in Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*. The source for this is a Latin treatise on formal logic ascribed to Apuleius: *Aristo autem Alexandrinus et nonnulli Peripatetici iuniores quinque alios modos praeterea suggerunt universalis illationis* ('though Aristo of Alexandria and certain later Peripatetics added further five other moods of universal syllogism', Apul., *De interpretatione* 13.193 = Fr. 4 Mariotti).[54]

What is quite significant so far is the apparent connection between Andronicus and Aristo (it is supposed that the latter followed the interpretations of the former),[55] and Aristo's role in the early history of Aristotelian exegesis. The impact of the Aristotelian revival across cultural centres is crucial in this respect: we saw above that Simplicius mentioned Aristo as an interpreter of the *Categories* alongside another Alexandrian, Eudorus, for whom there is no evidence of study or other activity outside Alexandria (see below pp. 52–60 on Eudorus). The two are paired again in a very different context, in a passage from Strabo that could suggest Aristo's presence in Egypt after he had become a Peripatetic:[56]

ἀλλ' ἐῶ ταῦτα πολλῶν εἰρηκότων ὧν ἀρκέσει δύο μηνῦσαι τοὺς ποιήσαντας καθ' ἡμᾶς τὸ Περὶ τοῦ Νείλου βιβλίον, Εὔδωρόν τε καὶ Ἀρίστωνα τὸν ἐκ τῶν Περιπάτων· πλὴν γὰρ τῆς τάξεως τά γε ἄλλα καὶ τῇ φράσει καὶ τῇ ἐπιχειρήσει ταὐτά ἐστι κείμενα παρ' ἀμφοτέροις. ἐγὼ γοῦν ἀπορούμενος ἀντιγράφων εἰς τὴν ἀντιβολὴν ἐκ θατέρου θάτερον ἀντέβαλον· πότερος δ' ἦν ὁ τἀλλότρια ὑποβαλλόμενος, ἐν Ἄμμωνος εὕροι τις ἄν. Εὔδωρος δ' ᾐτιᾶτο τὸν Ἀρίστωνα· ἡ μέντοι φράσις Ἀριστώνειος μᾶλλόν ἐστιν.

But I will leave these things aside, as they have been discussed by many, of whom it will be enough to mention the two who wrote the book *On the Nile* in our times, Eudorus and Aristo the Peripatetic; for apart from the order, in all other respects including phrasing and reasoning, the same things are found in both authors. As I had no copies for collation,[57] I checked one work against the other; which of the two plagiarised the other's material, only Ammon knows. Eudorus accused Aristo; but the style seems rather more suited to Aristo. (Str. 17.1.5)

[54] Aristo's name is here a correction from *Aristo[teles]*; for Moraux's doubts about the text and the ascriptions favoured by Mariotti see Moraux 1973: 190–1. On the Apuleius passage see also Sharples 2010: 96–7 and Barnes 2007: 535–6.

[55] See Gottschalk 1987: 1106.

[56] Cf. Glucker 1978: 95–6.

[57] As Sharples points out (2010: 13 with n. 3), it is not entirely clear what it was that Strabo was lacking; perhaps he could not procure more than exemplar from each text (which he considered essential if one was to produce an accurate copy, cf. 13.1.54).

This passage makes clear that the two philosophers were contemporaries and, if not personally acquainted, were familiar at least with each other's work – since Eudorus could accuse Aristo of plagiarism and Strabo cannot tell who copied from whom. It is also a valuable indication for the range of interests of Alexandrian philosophers, as well as for the occasional examples of antagonism.[58]

What survives from the output of Antiochus' other Alexandrian pupil, Dio, is not of a strictly speaking philosophical nature, but the new readings offered by Blank from *PHerc.* 1021 confirm that he continued to be an adherent of Antiochus' Old Academy even after Aristo and Cratippus became Peripatetics: Δ[ί]ω̣ν̣ δὲ τῆς ἀρ[χ]α̣ία[ς] Ἀ|καδη̣μείας. ('while Dio [was a member/remained an adherent] of the Old Academy', xxxv.15–16). It is somewhat frustrating that there is no verb governing the expression 'of the Old Academy', because we are not told what exactly Dio's status was within the school once the others turned to the Peripatos.[59]

As far as further information on Dio's activities goes, he can be identified with Athenaeus' source for the tale of the Egyptians' love of alcohol and their invention of beer:

Ἑλλάνικος δέ φησιν ἐν τῇ Πλινθίνῃ πόλει Αἰγύπτου πρώτῃ εὑρεθῆναι τὴν ἄμπελον. διὸ καὶ Δίων ὁ ἐξ Ἀκαδημίας φιλοίνους καὶ φιλοπότας τοὺς Αἰγυπτίους γενέσθαι· εὑρεθῆναί τε βοήθημα παρ' αὐτοῖς ὥστε τοὺς διὰ πενίαν ἀποροῦντας οἴνου τὸν ἐκ τῶν κριθῶν γενόμενον πίνειν· καὶ οὕτως ἥδεσθαι τοὺς τοῦτον προσφερομένους ὡς καὶ ᾄδειν καὶ ὀρχεῖσθαι καὶ πάντα ποιεῖν ὅσα τοὺς ἐξοίνους γινομένους. Ἀριστοτέλης δέ φησιν ὅτι οἱ μὲν ὑπ' οἴνου μεθυσθέντες ἐπὶ πρόσωπον φέρονται, οἱ δὲ τὸν κρίθινον πεπωκότες ἐξυπτιάζονται τὴν κεφαλήν· ὁ μὲν γὰρ οἶνος καρηβαρικός, ὁ δὲ κρίθινος καρωτικός.

Hellanicus says that the vine was first discovered in the Egyptian town of Plinthia. This is why Dio the Academic [says] that Egyptians became wine-lovers and liked a drink. An aid was discovered by them, so that those too poor to afford wine could drink the barley 'wine'. And those who take this are so delighted that they sing and dance and do everything that people

[58] Aristo's interests may have included Stoicising thought on the definition of *ars* and grammar in particular, if one identifies him with the *Aristo* cited twice by Marius Victorinus in his treatise on grammar. Cf. Moraux 1973: 192–3 and Frs. 5–6 Mariotti.

[59] Blank is certain that nothing is missing at the end of this sentence: 'we can be sure to end where Philodemus – at least in this draft – intended, thanks to a newly read *diple* in col. xxxv 16', Blank 2007: 89. The simplest solution would be to supply ἐγένετο from the ἐγένοντο in the preceding sentence.

drunk on wine do. Aristotle on the other hand says that those drunk on wine fall on their face, while those who have drunk the barley 'wine' fall backwards; for wine causes headache and the barley one is soporific. (Ath. 1.34b)

Dio 'of the Academy' is also mentioned as an authority on the effects of wine in the proem to Plutarch's *Table Talk* (*Quaest. conv.* 612D–E). Less secure but still plausible is his association with the anecdote about the proverbial 'Dio's *gru*' (τὸ τοῦ Δίωνος γρῦ), found in the Pseudo-Plutarchan *Alexandrian Proverbs* and in a host of other paroemiographical sources, including Stobaeus (3.19), who refers to 'Dio the Academic' (Δίωνι τῷ Ἀκαδημιακῷ). The word *gru* became a synonym of 'nothing', οὐδὲ γρῦ meaning 'not a thing', 'not the smallest piece'. According to Hesychius (γ 938) and other lexicographical sources, it originally referred to the dirt under one's fingernails (cf. LSJ s.v.).

τὸ τοῦ Δίωνος γρῦ: οὗτος ὁ Δίων Ἀλεξανδρεὺς μὲν ἦν τὸ γένος, διαβόητος δὲ ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίᾳ, ἔχων ἀδελφὸν παλαιστὴν Διονύσιον, †Τόψιον ἐπικαλούμενον. λοιδορούμενος δ' ὑπό τινος τῶν ἀνταγωνιστῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκούων ῥητὰ καὶ ἄρρητα καίτοι πολλοῦ παρακολουθοῦντος ὄχλου αὐτὸς μὲν οὐδὲν ἐφθέγξατο κατεσταλμένος τὸ τῆς φιλοσοφίας παράγγελμα τηρῶν· ἐντὸς δὲ τοῦ ἰδίου πυλῶνος γενόμενος καὶ μηδὲν ὀργῆς ὑποφήνας εἶπε πρὸς τὸν νεανίαν 'οὐδὲ γρῦ'. ὁ δὲ ἀθυμήσας ἀπήγξατο.

Dio's *gru*: this Dio was a native of Alexandria and renowned as a philosopher; he had a brother who was a wrestler, called Dionysius and nicknamed Topsius (?). As he was insulted by one of his brother's rivals and hearing all kinds of things, even though a large crowd was watching, he did not say anything, keeping himself calm by following the precepts of philosophy; when he was inside his own gatehouse and without showing the slightest sign of anger he said to the young man 'not a thing'; and he [the aggressive young man] in despair hanged himself. (Ps.-Plu., *De proverbiis Alexandrinorum* 29)

It is perhaps not surprising that Dio became a proverbial figure in his native city, since historical sources place him at the forefront of Alexandrian public life: he led an embassy to Rome aiming to prevent the reinstatement of Ptolemy XII Auletes to the throne in 57 BC, but he and his colleagues were murdered as part of the king's conspiracy, which apparently involved prominent Romans as accomplices. Details of the case are discussed by Cicero, *Cael.* 23–4 and 51, and

Cassius Dio 39.12–14. A briefer account of the same events is given by Strabo:

ἐν τούτῳ τὸν Αὐλητὴν ἀφικόμενον εἰς Ῥώμην δεξάμενος Πομπήιος Μάγνος συνίστησι τῇ συγκλήτῳ καὶ διαπράττεται κάθοδον μὲν τούτῳ, τῶν δὲ πρέσβεων τῶν πλείστων, ἑκατὸν ὄντων, ὄλεθρον τῶν καταπρεσβευσάντων αὐτοῦ· τούτων δ' ἦν καὶ Δίων ὁ Ἀκαδημαϊκὸς ἀρχιπρεσβευτὴς γεγονώς.

Meanwhile Pompey the Great recommended to the Senate Auletes, who had come to Rome, and achieved his reinstatement; but for most of the ambassadors, one hundred of them, [he effected] the destruction of those who had spoken against him; Dio the Academic had been the head ambassador among them. (Str. 17.1.11)

All these references to 'Dio the Academic' are compatible with the new readings from Philodemus' Life of Antiochus. The following remarks also testify to Dio's intellectual attainments, and suggest that he had a high profile as a scholar too, even in Rome:

neque solum Caelius, sed etiam adulescentes humanissimi et doctissimi, rectissimis studiis atque optimis artibus praediti, Titus Gaiusque Coponii, qui ex omnibus maxime Dionis mortem doluerunt, qui cum doctrinae studio atque humanitatis tum etiam hospitio Dionis tenebantur. habitabat apud Titum, ut audistis, Dio, erat ei cognitus Alexandriae.

And not only Caelius, but also the most accomplished and learned young men, devoted to the most appropriate studies and the most excellent pursuits, Titus and Gaius Coponius,[60] who grieved the death of Dio more than anyone else, as they were attached to him by the pursuit of science and culture as well as by hospitality ties. For Dio was staying with Titus, as you have heard: he had got to know him in Alexandria. (Cic. *Cael.* 24)

We have therefore seen two different paths taken by Antiochus' two Alexandrian pupils. Aristo pursued the current philosophical trends by engaging in rigorous study of Aristotle's text; it is not clear where he received the stimulus for such an endeavour. At some point we find him probably back in Alexandria writing a book on the Nile and competing with Eudorus. Dio, on the other hand, remained known as an Old Academic and got involved in public affairs and embassies (like his teacher Antiochus), at the cost of his own life. Our

[60] The Coponii brothers are also mentioned in *Pro Balbo* 53.

only indication about his written output points to a matter of local Egyptian interest, on the discovery of wine and beer (comparable to Aristo's work on the Nile).

Based on the evidence discussed so far, it is not possible to decide whether Dio left Alexandria with Antiochus to return to Athens after the events described in Cicero's *Lucullus*. We have seen that Philodemus' *Syntaxis* does not say that he ever was a pupil of Aristus, and it positively distinguishes him from the two that became Peripatetics.[61] Even in Aristo's case, it is not self-evident that his conversion took place in Athens, because in the first century BC membership of a philosophical sect was more a matter of subscribing to a set of doctrines and declaring allegiance to a particular tradition, without necessarily joining any well-defined localised institution. Moreover, Eudorus was apparently able to experience the revival of Aristotelianism from Alexandria. In fact, the only piece of evidence that has a specific bearing on Aristo's and Dio's movements and place(s) of residence in the period after Antiochus' sojourn at Alexandria is Philodemus' personal relationship with the group.

As we have seen, Philodemus' wording at *Index Ac*. XXXV.7–10 is: καὶ δὴ καὶ σ̣υ̣νήθεις ἡ|μῶν Ἀρίστωνά τε καὶ Δίω|να Ἀλεξανδρεῖς καὶ Κρά|τιππον Περγαμηνόν ('and in particular my friends Aristo and Dio of Alexandria and Cratippus of Pergamum'). The personal reference is rare but not unparalleled in the *Syntaxis*, cf. *Index Stoicorum* LXXVIII.2ff.: καὶ Ἀπολλώνιος Πτολεμαιεὺς φίλος ἡμῶν, διακηκοὼς καὶ Δαρδάνου [καὶ] Μνησάρχου ('Apollonius of Ptolemais, my friend, who has heard both Dardanus and Mnesarchus') and LXXVI.6–7: ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ Θίβρ[ωνα οἶδα ('and I also know about Thibro'). Gigante in fact used these references as proof that Philodemus had no sectarian animosity towards the other philosophical schools.[62] Even more strikingly, Blank's new readings reveal a close personal affection between Philodemus and Antiochus himself: [ἐ]τελεύτησεν ἠγα|π̣η̣μέ[νο]ς̣ ὑπὸ πολλῶν κἀ||μοῦ κ̣α̣ὶ αὐτὸς [ἡ]μᾶς ἀπ̣ο|δεδεγμένος ('he died having been loved by many

[61] *Pace* Glucker 1978: 96: 'But according to the Acad. Ind. (XXXV, 7–9), he [*sc*. Dio] had already been a member of Aristus' school in Athens, and had seceded from it and become a Peripatetic.'

[62] Gigante 2001: 41.

including myself and having personally given us a favourable reception', *Index Ac.* XXXIV.42–XXXV.2).

The most likely scenario is that Philodemus became acquainted with Antiochus and his pupils in Athens, in the period during which Antiochus taught at the Ptolemaeum, which would place Aristo and Dio back in Athens in the late 80s and 70s BC. If in fact Philodemus was born in Gadara around 110 BC, he could be arriving in Athens around 85 BC when he had reached the age of twenty-five or thereabouts.[63] But there is one intriguing (and frustrating) passage that appears to link Philodemus with Alexandria too, even though severe textual problems obscure the details of the matter: in a sentence referring to someone who 'kept hold of' Philo's school, Philodemus appears to be offering a temporal specification of this event based on certain movements between Alexandria and Athens.[64] The most plausible interpretation of this problematic bit of text involves Philodemus himself travelling from Alexandria and being in Athens[65] at the time when Philo's school was changing status (?) and was held (διακατεῖχεν) by an unidentifiable individual.[66]

The implication is, then, that Philodemus spent time in Alexandria in the period prior to Philo's death and succession (84/83 BC). Sider

63 The suggestion that this was a reasonable age for someone coming to study philosophy in Athens is supported by the fact that Philo and Clitomachus were both twenty-four when they arrived and Charmadas twenty-two (*Index Ac.* XXXIII.5–6; XXV.3–4; XXXI.34–8).

64 καὶ τὴν σχολὴ[ν] | αὐτοῦ . . . . . . ọσο.μ̣αικιος ἐ|φ' ἡ[[α]]`μῶν´ Ἀθήνηθ̣ε̣ν̣ π[αρα]βαλόν|των ἐξ Ἀ[λ]εξανδρείας | κα[ὶ] διακατεῖχεν ('and his school . . . *maikios* . . . in my time, coming from Alexandria [having come?] from Athens, and held on to it'). Much depends on what one makes of the genitive παραβαλόντων: scholars have thought it refers to an unidentified group of philosophers, perhaps Antiochus' followers travelling from Athens to Alexandria and back to Athens (Dorandi 1991: 80; 1986: 116; Glucker 1978: 18). Such interpretations are partly due to the difficulties in making sense of the double expression of provenance, both Ἀθήνηθεν and ἐξ Ἀλεξανδρείας. But it is very hard to see how even Philodemus could have failed to supply the subject of the genitive absolute παραβαλόντων, if he intended it to be something other than ἡμῶν.

65 Puglia 1998b: 135 claimed to have confirmed the reading Ἀθήνησιν, though Blank 2007: 87 n. 5 expressed some reservation. Ἀθήνησιν suggests location, not motion towards a place, and παραβάλλω is used (with the dative) in the sense of attending someone's lectures (D.L. 5.86; 6.21). A possible translation would be 'in my time, when I was attending lectures at Athens, having come from Alexandria'. It is not clear, however, whether this sense applies to παραβάλλω when used absolutely.

66 Puglia 2000: 21–2. It seems that another main verb is required, to be connected in parataxis with κα[ὶ] διακατεῖχεν, because the other meanings of καί are not appropriate here at the end of the sentence.

hinted at a possible sojourn of Philodemus in Alexandria based on different evidence, namely his remarks about the city as a cultural centre in his *Rhetoric*: ἐνίους δὲ [*sc*. φιλοσόφους] καὶ δυναστευτικαὶ πόλεις καὶ χῶραι κατέσχον ὥσπερ Ἀλεξάνδρεια καὶ Ῥώμη, τοῦτο μὲν ἀνάγκαις τοῦτο δὲ μεγάλαις ἑαυτῶν καὶ πατρίδων χρείαις ('some philosophers were held even by the oligarchical cities and countries like Alexandria and Rome, sometimes by force, sometimes through great benefactions to themselves and their homelands', *Rh.* 2.145 Fr. III 8–15 Sudhaus). Puglia takes Sider's suggestions further, making use of the content of some of Philodemus' epigrams to argue that they imply first-hand knowledge of Egyptian and Alexandrian locations, curiosities etc.[67] There is no concrete proof for all this, but the attraction of Alexandria for a young epigrammatist from Syria is not easily denied.

EUDORUS AND HIS ALEXANDRIAN BACKGROUND

The next Alexandrian philosopher of note from the first century BC is Eudorus. There is little information about him, particularly from the point of view of biography. Such deficits often encourage conjecture and speculation, and in Eudorus' case it has led to his name being associated with all kinds of developments in first-century BC philosophy. Arguments in support of such associations often invoke Eudorus' Alexandrian background as a significant factor.

Firstly, in the view developed most decisively by Fraser, Eudorus was an important member of the 'school' or 'circle' that was allegedly established in Alexandria by Antiochus of Ascalon (see above pp. 36–7). The implication in this case is that Eudorus becomes integrated as an exponent of a trend resulting from Antiochus' blend of Stoic and Peripatetic elements under the auspices of the Academy. This trend was then labelled 'eclecticism' by Fraser and others, thus producing a line of influence from Antiochus through to Potamo. Arius Didymus, who was a native of Alexandria but spent much time abroad since he enjoyed the patronage of Augustus,[68] is also mentioned in this

[67] Sider 1997: 10 with n. 26. Puglia 1998b: 137–40.
[68] Augustus decided not to punish the Alexandrian people partly as a favour to Arius, cf. Plu. *Ant.* 80; D.C. 51.16.3–4, who uses the expression Ἄρειον τὸν πολίτην. See below pp. 62–3.

connection. Eudorus is seen by Fraser as an intermediary, transmitting Antiochus' views to Potamo and Arius Didymus.[69]

An alternative interpretation credits Eudorus with inspiring the revival of Platonism, in which case he should be entitled to a more prominent role in the history of philosophy. Tarrant argued that the origins of later Platonism can be discerned in Eudorus, particularly if one attributes to him most of the section on ethics (Περὶ τοῦ ἠθικοῦ εἴδους τῆς φιλοσοφίας, 'On the ethical branch of philosophy') in Stobaeus (2.7, 42.13–57.12 W), which contains the crucial metaphysical notions of Ideas, immanent Form and Matter etc. Alexandria plays a part in this account too, as connections are drawn with the Platonism of Philo in the next generation: 'to him [*sc.* Eudorus] we may attribute Platonic elements in Philo of Alexandria'.[70] Tarrant also put Eudorus forward as the likely candidate for the authorship of the Platonist commentary on the *Theaetetus* preserved by a second-century AD papyrus found in Egypt.[71] A further point raised in connection with Eudorus' Alexandrian background is his debt to Pythagorean texts, and the possibility of such literature being produced in the Egyptian capital in his time.[72]

However, only one of our sources on Eudorus explicitly refers to him as an Alexandrian, namely the passage in Stobaeus prefacing his ethical philosophy: ἔστιν οὖν Εὐδώρου τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρέως, Ἀκαδημιακοῦ φιλοσόφου, Διαίρεσις τοῦ κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν λόγου, βιβλίον ἀξιόκτητον ('the *Classification of Philosophical Discourse* by Eudorus of Alexandria, an Academic philosopher, is a book worth acquiring', Stob. 2.7, 42.8–9 W). The passage from Strabo about the rivalry with Aristo (cited above) provides further evidence for Eudorus' Egyptian background, as well as a very valuable indication for his date. Strabo's expression 'in our times' can refer to his lifetime in general (63 BC–AD 24), and need not imply that Aristo and Eudorus' books were written during Strabo's stay in Egypt in the 20s BC. Thus Eudorus' activity must have overlapped with Aristo's for a period in the mid first century BC, and it would be interesting to

69 Fraser 1972: 488, 494. As I have already mentioned (p. 36), this approach was heavily criticised by Glucker 1978, esp. 90–7.

70 Tarrant 1985: 5.

71 Tarrant 1983; this attribution was refuted by Mansfeld 1991: 543–4.

72 For references see Bonazzi 2005: 117–18, nn. 1, 4, 5.

know where Strabo learnt about Eudorus' allegation against Aristo, which could not have been included in the original work: perhaps Eudorus issued a second edition? The possibility that Strabo knew Eudorus personally cannot be entirely excluded either.[73]

Eudorus was also familiar with the work of Diodorus, a mathematician from Alexandria[74] who is not particularly well known outside the astronomical treatise entitled Περὶ σφαίρας or Περὶ τοῦ παντός ('On the sphere' or 'On the universe') by Achilles Tatius (perhaps third century AD, probably to be distinguished from the author of the novel *Leucippe and Clitophon*).[75] Eudorus is cited by Achilles as the source for one of the references to Diodorus, as well as in a doxographical passage that discusses the question whether the stars are 'animals' (ζῷα), listing the views of Anaxagoras, Democritus, Epicurus, Plato, Aristotle and Chrysippus. It is therefore most likely that the references come from a general doxographical work by Eudorus and we need not suppose that he wrote a commentary on Aratus (or even a separate work on astronomy).

In the light of this evidence it is most reasonable to locate Eudorus' activity at Alexandria, but we must also admit that it is not decisive and that the mitigating factor remains the total absence of information about him in connection with any other location. A further question that arises here is the precise significance of the characterisation 'Academic' (Ἀκαδημαϊκός/Ἀκαδημιακός) used for Eudorus both by Stobaeus (2.7, 42.13 W) and by Simplicius (*In Cat.* 187.10). In what sense can a philosopher living in Alexandria in the mid first century BC be regarded as a member of the Academy? Glucker, who was extremely dismissive of any influence by Antiochus on Eudorus in an Alexandrian context, nevertheless went on to suggest that the term 'Academic' implies a period of study for Eudorus in the Athenian Academy. This would mean Antiochus' establishment, which was at the time probably under the control of Aristus, though Glucker

73 Cf. Glucker 1978: 122.

74 Stoic influence from Posidonius has been detected in Diodorus, Dillon 1977: 117, but it is not clear how far his interests ranged beyond mathematics and astronomy, Goulet s.v. 'Diodoros d'Alexandrie', *DPhA* II, 782–3.

75 Robiano s.v. 'Achille', *DPhA* I, 48–9. A version of this work by Achilles was added as an introduction to the *Phaenomena* at some stage of the manuscript tradition of Aratus.

does not exclude the possibility that Eudorus may have studied with Antiochus himself after all (only in Athens)![76]

It is more likely, however, that 'Academic' is Eudorus' self-representation, in a conscious move to align himself with what he perceived as the Academic tradition. This need not be inconsistent with any Platonist tendencies detected in Eudorus' work, since he probably did not pursue Platonism as a radical break from the Hellenistic Academy. As to the question of what the Academic tradition may have meant for Eudorus and how he came into contact with it, attention is usually drawn to Antiochus' Alexandrian pupils[77] who had been members of the dogmatist 'Old Academy' (we saw that Strabo mentioned Aristo and Eudorus as contemporaries and rivals). Dio, who must have been back in Alexandria for some time before his death in 57 BC, is an ideal candidate as the transmitter of the (Old) Academic system and identity. Apart from these direct contacts, Eudorus probably also had access to works by prominent Academics – Philo's Roman books had famously reached Alexandria in the early first century BC.[78]

Irrespective of Eudorus' precise philosophical position, his activity indicates that Alexandrian intellectual life was 'up to speed' with most of the new trends emerging in the first century BC. First of all Eudorus, like Aristo, was one of the earliest authors who wrote on Aristotle's *Categories*,[79] a work that, whether or not we suppose it to have been unknown during the Hellenistic period, attracted a renewed wave of attention and commentary during our period, as we have already seen: οὗτοι τοὺς παλαιοὺς τῶν Κατηγοριῶν ἐξηγητὰς αἰτιῶνται, Βόηθον καὶ Ἀρίστωνα καὶ Ἀνδρόνικον καὶ Εὔδωρον καὶ Ἀθηνόδωρον ('they [*sc.* Achaicus and Sotion] criticise the old commentators of the *Categories*, Boethus and Aristo and Andronicus and Eudorus and Athenodorus', Simp. *In Cat.* 159.31–2). The presence of Eudorus (and Aristo) in this list suggests that Alexandria was one of the centres where the impact of the 'new Aristotelianism' was felt and provoked a response.

76 Glucker 1978: 122–3 with n. 9.

77 E.g. Dillon 1977: 115.

78 Cf. Tarrant 1985: 42, 47, 129.

79 For the nature of Eudorus' work on the *Categories* see Chiaradonna 2009: 95 with n. 25.

Eudorus was a critic of Aristotle's system of the Categories: he did not follow the order found in Aristotle's text, but placed quality before quantity, as did Pseudo-Archytas (Simp. *In Cat.* 206.10–15). He also complained that Aristotle did not devote a separate discussion to what is per se (καθ' αὑτό), as he did with relatives (Simp. *In Cat.* 174.14–16), and criticised examples such as 'winged, ruddered' (πτερωτόν, πηδαλιωτόν) as inaccurate correlatives because they signify potential and not actual relations (187.10–15).[80] There is also some evidence that he proposed an emendation for the text of *Metaph.* 1.6.988a9–11, though the exact content of his intervention is not certain, and depends on the interpretation of Alexander's text immediately before the following remark: ἱστορεῖ δὲ Ἀσπάσιος ὡς ἐκείνης μὲν ἀρχαιοτέρας οὔσης τῆς γραφῆς, μεταγραφείσης δὲ ταύτης ὕστερον ὑπὸ Εὐδώρου καὶ Εὐαρμόστου ('according to Aspasius, that reading is older, whereas this was corrected later by Eudorus and Euarmostus', Alex. Aphr. *In Metaph.* 59.6–8).[81] If 'that' (ἐκείνης) and 'this' (ταύτης) mean 'the former' and 'the latter', then Eudorus is the source for the reading accepted by modern editors: τὰ μὲν εἴδη τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῦ τί ἐστιν αἴτιον, τοῖς δὲ εἴδεσι τὸ ἕν ('the Forms are the cause of the essence of all other things, and the One is the cause of the essence of the Forms', which is mentioned second by Alexander). The fact that Alexander calls this reading 'the first' (ἡ πρώτη γραφή) complicates matters, as does the possibility that the expressions 'that' and 'this' come from Aspasius, whose context we do not have.[82]

In any case it is clear that Eudorus actively engaged with texts that were gradually gaining prominence at the time, and was one of the earliest critics to point out problems and difficulties. In fact, as Primavesi has argued, it appears that the *Metaphysics* was among the works by Aristotle that were not accessible during the Hellenistic

[80] See Chiaradonna 2009: 97–9 and 105. For further criticisms (Εὔδωρος ἐγκαλεῖ, αἰτιᾶται, ἀπορεῖ) cf. Simp. *In Cat.* 246.22; 268.13; 236.28.

[81] The preceding text runs as follows: φέρεται ἔν τισι γραφὴ τοιαύτη 'τὰ γὰρ εἴδη τοῦ τί ἐστιν αἴτια τοῖς ἄλλοις, τοῖς δὲ εἰδόσι τὸ ἓν καὶ τῇ ὕλῃ'. καὶ εἴη ἂν δι' αὐτῆς λεγόμενον ἔτι τοῖς οὐκ εἰδόσι τὴν Πλάτωνος δόξαν τὴν περὶ τῶν ἀρχῶν ὅτι τὸ ἓν καὶ ἡ ὑποκειμένη ὕλη ἀρχαὶ καὶ ὅτι τὸ ἓν καὶ τῇ ἰδέᾳ αἴτιον τοῦ τί ἐστιν. ἀμείνων μέντοι ἡ πρώτη γραφὴ ἡ δηλοῦσα ὅτι τὰ μὲν εἴδη τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῦ τί ἐστιν αἴτιον, τοῖς δὲ εἴδεσι τὸ ἕν (Alex. Aphr. *In Metaph.* 58.31–59.6).

[82] The passage is discussed in more detail by Bonazzi 2005: 144–9.

period and had only reappeared in the first century BC.[83] This would explain the fluidity of the text in Eudorus' time and the fact that he is credited with the earliest conjecture.

Another text that proved crucial for philosophical developments in the first century BC and falls within Eudorus' scope of interest is Plato's *Timaeus*. It is not clear whether Eudorus wrote a full commentary on the Platonic text or discussed specific problems in a separate work. Plutarch cites him three times, and he seems to have been the source for favourable reports on the views of the early Academics Xenocrates and Crantor, though Plutarch himself disagreed: ὁ μὲν Εὔδωρος οὐδετέρους ἀμοιρεῖν οἴεται τοῦ εἰκότος· ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκοῦσι τῆς Πλάτωνος ἀμφότεροι διαμαρτάνειν δόξης ('Eudorus thinks that neither of them lack plausibility; but to me it seems that they both failed to grasp Plato's view', Plu., *On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus* 1013B; cf. 1020C Εὔδωρος ἐπακολουθήσας Κράντορι, 'Eudorus following Crantor').

Eudorus' range of interests and the range of sources available to him suggest that Alexandria was a cultural centre offering both incentives and resources for a philosopher wishing to partake in contemporary debates. On the other hand, Eudorus also engaged with the philosophical tradition in a systematic way, composing an account of philosophy under the traditional classification into ethics, physics and logic:[84]

ἔστιν οὖν Εὐδώρου τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρέως, Ἀκαδημιακοῦ φιλοσόφου, Διαίρεσις τοῦ κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν λόγου, βιβλίον ἀξιόκτητον, ἐν ᾧ πᾶσαν ἐπεξελήλυθε προβληματικῶς τὴν ἐπιστήμην, ἧς ἐγὼ διαιρέσεως ἐκθήσομαι τὸ τῆς ἠθικῆς οἰκεῖον. ἔχει δ' οὕτως. τριμεροῦς ὄντος τοῦ κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν λόγου τὸ μέν ἐστιν αὐτοῦ ἠθικόν, τὸ δὲ φυσικόν, τὸ δὲ λογικόν.

The *Classification of Philosophical Discourse* by Eudorus of Alexandria, an Academic philosopher, is a book worth acquiring, in which he went through the whole body of science by posing problems; I will present the part of this classification relevant to ethics. It is as follows; philosophical discourse is divided into three parts, ethics, physics and logic. (Stob. 2.7, 42.7–13 W)

[83] Primavesi 2007: 69–70, 74.

[84] Note Eudorus' possible innovation in the sequence of the three disciplines, Dillon 1977: 121 with n. 1.

Eudorus' account shows great familiarity with the terminology and ethical philosophy of the Stoics, though his psychology is more attuned to Plato's tripartite division of the soul than to Stoic theory: ταῦτ' ἐστὶ τὰ πρῶτα μέρη τοῦ ἠθικοῦ λόγου θεωρητικόν, ὁρμητικόν, πρακτικόν ('these are the primary parts of the ethical discourse, theoretic, impulsive, practical', Stob. 2.7, 42.23 W).[85] This issue brings us back to the question of Eudorus' Platonism, which is of importance because Alexandria has occasionally been identified as the 'cradle' of Middle Platonism on this basis.

Matters are complicated by the fact that Simplicius and Stobaeus both describe Eudorus as an Academic, and there is no indication that he consciously broke away from that tradition.[86] Moreover, the attribution of a wide range of Platonic doctrines to Eudorus is often dependent upon the ascription of a very long passage from Stobaeus (from 2.7, 42.13 down to 57.12 W) to him.[87] An alternative approach to Eudorus' Platonism has been attempted by connecting it more closely with the Pythagorean elements in his philosophy.[88] Neo-Pythagoreanism is yet another characteristic trend of the first century BC that is exemplified in Eudorus' work. Other exponents that can be dated in that century with some certainty are Alexander Polyhistor, who came to Rome as a prisoner during the Mithridatic war and wrote *Successions of Philosophers*, where the section on Pythagoras contained material he had found 'in the Pythagorean memoirs' (ἐν τοῖς Πυθαγορικοῖς ὑπομνήμασι, D.L. 8.25–35); and Nigidius Figulus, who is known as a Pythagorean 'guru' from Cicero's translation of the *Timaeus* (Cic. *Tim.* 1–2).

It would be interesting as far as Eudorus is concerned if a similar neo-Pythagorean tradition could be associated with Alexandria. This was in fact the opinion of Zeller, who based his claim on a view of Alexandria as a cultural centre where the elements of religious mysticism, belief in revelation etc. were very prominent, creating a fertile background for the emergence of apocryphal Pythagorean literature. Potential Jewish influence and the Pythagorean elements in Eudorus

[85] For a discussion of this text and Eudorus' psychology see Bonazzi 2007a.
[86] Cf. Boys-Stones 2001: 100–1 with n. 7.
[87] See Dillon's discussion, Dillon 1977: 122–6.
[88] Cf. especially Bonazzi 2005 and 2007b with a detailed discussion of the crucial text, Simp. *In Ph.* 181.7–30.

and Philo of Alexandria were also used as evidence. Thesleff advanced a series of arguments pointing out that there was not as much overlap as previously thought between those 'Alexandrian' trends emphasised by Zeller and the content of most Pythagorean pseudepigrapha.[89] Moreover, there is a degree of circularity in advocating an Alexandrian background informing Eudorus' Pythagoreanism, if Eudorus himself is part of the evidence for such a background. A debate between Thesleff and Burkert resulted in a reconsideration of the date of some anonymous Pythagorica, but Burkert remained sceptical about the Alexandrian provenance of most treatises.[90]

The persistent problem is that those of the Pythagorean pseudepigrapha that can be most convincingly associated with Alexandria tend to be the ones containing legends about Pythagoras himself and material relating to the more 'cultic' aspect of Pythagoreanism.[91] Eudorus, on the other hand, exhibited the scientific/philosophical aspect, and introduced the cosmology based on the Monad and the indefinite Dyad. It is true that here too he 'innovated' by bringing in the Platonist/early Academic notion of the One at a level over and above the Monad and the Dyad:[92]

> γράφει δὲ περὶ τούτων ὁ Εὔδωρος τάδε· 'κατὰ τὸν ἀνωτάτω λόγον φατέον τοὺς Πυθαγορικοὺς τὸ ἓν ἀρχὴν τῶν πάντων λέγειν, κατὰ δὲ τὸν δεύτερον λόγον δύο ἀρχὰς τῶν ἀποτελουμένων εἶναι, τό τε ἓν καὶ τὴν ἐναντίαν τούτῳ φύσιν . . .'

> Eudorus writes the following on these issues: 'It must be pointed out that the Pythagoreans say that, at the highest level, the One is the principle of all things, and at a secondary level there are two principles of completed things, both the One and the nature opposed to it [later, 181.28, specified as the indefinite Dyad] . . .' (Simp. *In Ph.* 181.10–12)

Given all these complications, it might be on the whole more satisfactory to treat the various trends that are present in Eudorus' work as responses to stimuli arising from contemporary developments throughout the Greco-Roman world. These include a renewed interest in Aristotle's esoteric works, in Plato's *Timaeus* and in the

[89] Zeller 1869–82: III.2, 114–26; Thesleff 1961, esp. 46–50. [90] Burkert 1972, esp. 41.
[91] Thesleff 1961: 99; he makes a distinction between two 'Classes' of Pythagorica.
[92] See Bonazzi 2005: 121–4 and 2007b, esp. 367–73.

Pythagorean tradition (often in the same context). From this perspective, Eudorus' Alexandrian background can be associated with the broad and long-standing scholarly tradition of that city, which had always valued Greek 'old authorities' and learning through books. Such a productive and inclusive background is perhaps more compatible with Eudorus' unique contribution than the discovery of dominant *philosophical* influences in the city of Alexandria.

AENESIDEMUS

Aenesidemus was probably active earlier than Eudorus, based on the dating that takes into account his relationship with Lucius Aelius Tubero, who was legate of Cicero's brother Quintus in Asia in 58 BC, and to whom Aenesidemus dedicated his *Pyrrhonian Discourses*. The two could have met at Aegae in Aeolia, one of the places mentioned in connection with Aenesidemus' biography (Phot. *Bibl.* Cod. 212, 169b 30–35 and 170a 39–41). A series of efforts have been made to ascertain whether Aegae was Aenesidemus' place of origin or of activity, given that Diogenes Laertius speaks of Cnossus as his birthplace (cf. D.L. 9.116, Αἰνεσίδημος Κνώσιος, 'Aenesidemus of Cnossus').[93] The role of Alexandria in Aenesidemus' career has not played any significant part in this debate; nevertheless, it is identified by Aristocles as his principal place of philosophical activity:

μηδενὸς δ' ἐπιστραφέντος αὐτῶν, ὡς εἰ μηδὲ ἐγένοντο τὸ παράπαν, ἐχθὲς καὶ πρώην ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ τῇ κατ' Αἴγυπτον Αἰνησίδημός τις ἀναζωπυρεῖν ἤρξατο τὸν ὕθλον τοῦτον.

And when nobody was paying attention to them [*sc*. the Pyrrhonist sceptics] any more, as if they had never existed, a certain Aenesidemus began to revive this nonsense yesterday or the day before at Alexandria in Egypt. (Aristocles ap. Eus. *PE* 14.18.29 = Fr. 4 Chiesara)

Thus Alexandria emerges as the original scene of another important revival of the first century BC, that of Pyrrhonist scepticism. The common ground between Pyrrhonism and medical Empiricism appears to have provided fruitful paths for exploration on both sides, and the

93 Cf. Decleva Caizzi 1992, esp. 180; *contra* Mansfeld 1996 arguing for Aegae as the birthplace; Polito 2002, esp. 152–3 offers further arguments for Cnossus.

Alexandrian aspect of the connection would be further corroborated if the Heraclides who is mentioned as the teacher of Aenesidemus at D.L. 9.116 were to be identified with Heraclides of Tarentum.[94]

Furthermore, Aenesidemus' turn to Pyrrhonism is commonly construed as a result of his rejection of the increasingly dogmatist developments in the Academy to which he had belonged.[95] It is not impossible that echoes of the disagreement between Antiochus and Philo on the sceptical or otherwise character of the 'genuine' Academy, a matter on which Antiochus had held debates in Alexandria, were still resounding in the teachings of local Academics such as Dio: 'at Alexandria, to which he [*sc*. Aenesidemus] moved, he could certainly have found traces of the presence of Antiochus and of Heraclitus of Tyre the pupil of Clitomachus and Philo of Larissa'.[96] Aenesidemus himself felt that neither side were sufficiently free from dogmatism, and compared his Academic contemporaries to 'Stoics fighting Stoics'.[97] Further support for locating Aenesidemus' activity in Alexandria may be found in the fact that Philo of Alexandria knew and used the tropes (*De ebrietate* 169–202).[98]

Finally, Aenesidemus' strategy of refuting the doctrines of all the dogmatist sects involved and required a degree of familiarity with earlier philosophers' work. Sedley advanced the hypothesis that much of the doxographical material found in Sextus Empiricus is in fact derived from Aenesidemus (since Sextus never cites any philosophers or other sources later than him). Doxographical activity would indeed be another feature in tune with the turn to the past that was characteristic of Alexandrian intellectual life in the first century BC, but since Aenesidemus' motives for engagement with the philosophical tradition were polemical rather than historical/antiquarian, one might be inclined to see him as a beneficiary from rather than a contributor to

[94] Decleva Caizzi 1992: 178.

[95] Phot. *Bibl.* Cod. 212, 169b: τῶν ἐξ Ἀκαδημίας τινὶ συναιρεσιώτῃ Λευκίῳ Τοβέρωνι. On this point, too, there is disagreement between Decleva Caizzi 1992 and Mansfeld 1996. For a survey of the problems involved see Polito 2002: 154–7.

[96] Decleva Caizzi 1992: 189.

[97] οἱ δ' ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀκαδημίας, φησί, μάλιστα τῆς νῦν, καὶ στωϊκαῖς συμφέρονται ἐνίοτε δόξαις, καὶ εἰ χρὴ τἀληθὲς εἰπεῖν, Στωϊκοὶ φαίνονται μαχόμενοι Στωϊκοῖς (Phot. *Bibl.* Cod. 212, 170a 14–16).

[98] Cf. Mansfeld 1996: 240.

the proliferation of 'historical or critical textbooks'.[99] On the other hand, the work of Timon of Phlius may have played a part in his appreciation of Pyrrho; it was certainly available in Alexandria, and moreover it was an object of study for authors engaged in philosophical history and biography, since Sotion of Alexandria (see above p. 35) devoted a separate work to a study of Timon's *Silloi*.[100]

ARIUS DIDYMUS

This survey will close with a brief look at the evidence on Arius, Augustus' court philosopher. From the connection with Augustus we may safely conclude that Arius flourished towards the end of the first century BC;[101] he was still active in 9 BC, when he wrote a consolation for Livia on the death of Drusus (Sen. *Dial.* 4.2). His connection with Augustus is reported by Suetonius (*Aug.* 89.2: *eruditione etiam varia repletus per Arei philosophi filiorumque eius Dionysii et Nicanoris contubernium*, 'he received varied learning through the presence by his side of Arius the philosopher and his sons Dionysius and Nicanor'). Plutarch also relates the story that Augustus, when he conquered Alexandria in 30 BC, cited personal favour to Arius as one of the reasons for sparing the citizens:

αὐτὸς δὲ Καῖσαρ εἰσήλαυνεν εἰς τὴν πόλιν, Ἀρείῳ τῷ φιλοσόφῳ προσδιαλεγόμενος καὶ τὴν δεξιὰν ἐνδεδωκώς, ἵν' εὐθὺς ἐν τοῖς πολίταις περίβλεπτος εἴη καὶ θαυμάζοιτο τιμώμενος ὑπ' αὐτοῦ διαπρεπῶς. εἰς δὲ τὸ γυμνάσιον εἰσελθὼν καὶ ἀναβὰς ἐπὶ βῆμά τι πεποιημένον, ἐκπεπληγμένων ὑπὸ δέους τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ προσπιπτόντων, ἀναστῆναι κελεύσας ἔφη πάσης αἰτίας τὸν δῆμον ἀφιέναι, πρῶτον μὲν διὰ τὸν κτίστην Ἀλέξανδρον, δεύτερον δὲ τῆς πόλεως θαυμάζων τὸ κάλλος καὶ τὸ μέγεθος, τρίτον δ' Ἀρείῳ τῷ ἑταίρῳ χαριζόμενος.

Caesar himself was marching into the city, in conversation with Arius the philosopher and holding him by the right hand, so that he would be immediately visible to the citizens and admired for his exceptional honouring by Caesar. He came into the gymnasium and stepped onto a purpose-made stand, and as the people were struck by fear and were kneeling, he told them to stand up and said that he absolved the demos of all blame, firstly

[99] Sedley 1992: 24–5.
[100] Ath. 8.336d: φησὶ Σωτίων ὁ Ἀλεξανδρεὺς ἐν τοῖς περὶ τῶν Τίμωνος Σίλλων.
[101] Arius is also associated with Maecenas by Aelian, *VH* 12.25.

on account of Alexander, the founder of the city, secondly because of his admiration for the city's size and beauty, and thirdly as a favour for his friend Arius. (Plu. *Ant.* 80.1–3; cf. also Cassius Dio 51.16.4)

From the next section in Plutarch's *Antony* (80.4) we learn about the 'sophist' Philostratus, a gifted speaker who was pardoned by Augustus after the capture of Alexandria, mainly to save Arius from this man's persistent harassment. Plutarch presents Philostratus as a philosophical impostor (εἰσποιῶν δὲ μὴ προσηκόντως ἑαυτὸν τῇ Ἀκαδημείᾳ, 'he improperly inserted himself into the Academy') and says that he was treated with repugnance by Augustus. His namesake Flavius Philostratus (*Lives of the Sophists* 1.5) adds the information that he was Cleopatra's 'companion in philosophy' (Κλεοπάτρᾳ μὲν συμφιλοσοφοῦντα τῇ βασιλίδι), therefore a sort of court philosopher.

From Plutarch we also learn that Arius advised Augustus to do away with Caesarion (*Ant.* 81.4–5), and that he was appointed governor of Sicily (*Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata* 207B). Based on this information, it is not clear how much of Arius' career should be placed in Alexandria: we could assume that he was at least educated there, but he must have moved to Rome, where he became acquainted with Augustus; he then returned in 30 BC and entered the city with the conquering party, but left again at some point for Sicily.

These references establish important biographical details in terms of Arius' date, his connection with Alexandria and his relationship with Augustus. The latter is significant for the importance of Greek intellectuals as advisers in Augustus' regime, the influence they could command and the political appointments that could be involved (Augustus appointed another teacher of his, Athenodorus the son of Sandon, as governor of Tarsus, Str. 14.5.14). But the evidence discussed so far has not provided any indication for the nature of Arius' philosophical interests and activities. For this we may turn to the summary list of Stoic philosophers that follows Diogenes' Life of Chrysippus in two manuscripts:[102] the name Ἄρειος appears there after the two Athenodori and Antipater, and before Cornutus, which is compatible with a dating in the Augustan period.

102 The list was edited by Rose 1866: 370–1; see also Dorandi 1992.

A question that has proved rather more controversial is whether the Arius who taught and accompanied Augustus should be identified with the doxographer (Arius) Didymus, who was used by Clement, Eusebius and Stobaeus. There is no firm evidence either way, and scholars' argumentation more often than not consists in demanding this elusive evidence from the proponents of the opposing view.[103] Without claiming certainty, one might suggest that a large-scale doxography is an appropriate project for the type of intellectual climate I have been describing, that is for someone educated in Alexandria towards the end of the first century BC. The tendency to organise and codify received wisdom was evident already among Alexandrian doctors and grammarians, and it gathered pace with the philosophers, as the closure or dispersal of the traditional schools created new circumstances in first-century BC intellectual life.

Further signs of influence by the Alexandrian scholarly tradition on philosophical activity in the Egyptian capital can be detected in the case of Theon, who was active slightly later than Arius: Θέων, Ἀλεξανδρεύς, φιλόσοφος Στωϊκός, γεγονὼς ἐπὶ Αὐγούστου μετὰ Ἄρειον. ἔγραψε τῆς Ἀπολλοδώρου Φυσιολογικῆς εἰσαγωγῆς ὑπόμνημα, Περὶ τεχνῶν ῥητορικῶν βιβλία τρία ('Theon of Alexandria, a Stoic philosopher; he lived under Augustus, after Arius. He wrote a commentary on the *Introduction to the Science of Nature* by Apollodorus [of Seleuceia]; *On the Arts of Rhetoric* in three books', *Suda* θ 203). It is significant that this extremely rare instance of a Stoic commentary[104] is associated with Alexandria, and with a man that had other interests beyond his strictly philosophical ones, having also written on the tradition of rhetorical handbooks.

To conclude, it would be useful to summarise the principal characteristics of Alexandrian intellectual life in the first century BC, especially as far as philosophy is concerned. What emerges most

[103] See, for instance, Göransson 1995: 211–26 for arguments against the identification. Inwood, in his review of Göransson (*BMCR* 95.12.08), points out that these arguments in fact rest on the assumption that a Stoic could not have written a non-polemical doxography of other schools' doctrines. He also remarks on the 'speculative' identification of our doxographer as a Stoic based on the preserved index to Diogenes' text. For a summary of the issues see Sharples 2010: 21–2.

[104] Cf. Sedley 1997: 114 with n. 14.

strongly across the board is the preoccupation with the detailed study of written texts, including the compilation of bibliographies (such as the lists of philosophers' works now found in Diogenes Laertius, cf. above pp. 33–5) and exegetical works. In the case of grammarians, these written texts that were read, interpreted and commented on included not only the classics of Greek literature, but also the works of earlier authorities in the field of grammar itself, notably Aristarchus of Samothrace. Similarly, doctors continued their study of the Hippocratic corpus and also engaged in polemics with earlier exegetes (see above p. 31). In philosophy, such exegetical activity in Alexandria can be seen most clearly in the work of Aristo and Eudorus. This state of affairs reflects Alexandria's status as a unique centre of book-collecting, with rich holdings going back to the Ptolemaic period, but also keeping in touch with new developments in the first century BC (Philo's Roman books reached Alexandria, as did a new edition of Aristotle's *Categories*, or at least a new wave of interest in that work; Antiochus' *Sosus* was probably written in Alexandria).

The fact that the 'sophist' Philostratus chose to (fraudulently) claim allegiance to the Academy may be taken as evidence for some Academic tradition in Alexandria, perhaps the same tradition that links Dio and Eudorus, who are also known as 'Academics'. Moreover, a certain Demetrius the 'Platonist' is named by Lucian (*Cal.* 16) as a member of the court of Ptolemy 'Dionysus' (therefore of Auletes, Cleopatra's father, who wanted to be known as the 'New Dionysus'). Perhaps Lucian is referring (loosely) to someone associated with an Academic tradition, which was in any case Platonising if one judges from Eudorus.

We have seen that philosophical activity was initially instigated by 'outsiders' such as Antiochus, or Alexandrians who had studied elsewhere, such as Aristo and Dio. Gradually locals (notably Eudorus) began to make more of an impact. It is remarkable that all the principal trends of the first century BC were represented in Alexandria, creating a tension between the preservation of Hellenistic traditions on the one hand, and innovation on the other, which in turn consisted mostly in revivals of older systems. Thus the revivals of Platonism, Aristotelianism, Pythagoreanism and Pyrrhonism were all felt (or occasionally initiated) in Alexandria. And yet, no figure or

figures emerged as dominant enough to define the entire character of Alexandrian philosophy, precisely because all the different tendencies had sufficient outlets of expression. It was these conditions, then, that Potamo found particularly favourable for the introduction of an Eclectic sect.

CHAPTER 3

Potamo of Alexandria, life and work

DIOGENES LAERTIUS, THE *SUDA* AND POTAMO'S DATE

Potamo is one of the most intriguing figures in first-century BC philosophy. The limited information available on him comes mainly from Diogenes Laertius, who mentions Potamo almost as an appendix or afterthought to his lists of the various philosophical persuasions (αἱρέσεις), without attempting to fit him into any classification. In fact, immediately before the reference to Potamo Diogenes seems to be rounding off his general survey of philosophical sects: αἵδε μὲν ἀρχαὶ καὶ διαδοχαὶ καὶ τοσαῦτα μέρη καὶ τόσαι φιλοσοφίας αἱρέσεις ('so these are the beginnings and successions of philosophy and this is how many parts and sects it has', 1.20). Potamo is treated as an exceptional case because he did not subscribe to any of the systems listed by Diogenes and did not belong to any of the traditional successions, but introduced his own Eclectic sect by means of selection (ἐκλεξαμένου) from more than one existing sect:

ἔτι δὲ πρὸ ὀλίγου καὶ Ἐκλεκτική τις αἵρεσις εἰσήχθη ὑπὸ Ποτάμωνος τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρέως, ἐκλεξαμένου τὰ ἀρέσαντα ἐξ ἑκάστης τῶν αἱρέσεων.

In addition, a certain Eclectic sect was recently introduced by Potamo of Alexandria, who chose the elements that appealed to him/the doctrines from each of the sects. (D.L. 1.21)

The translation of τὰ ἀρέσαντα is not straightforward because if we take it in the technical sense that prevailed in the doxographical tradition (more commonly ἀρέσκοντα or *placita*, meaning 'tenets')[1] we would have to understand that Potamo incorporated the sets of

[1] For more examples and a discussion of several key occurrences of this term see Mansfeld and Runia 1997: 324–7.

central beliefs from all the sects in their entirety (because of the definite article). Construing the accusative in ἐκλεξαμένου τὰ ἀρέσαντα ('selecting the doctrines') as denoting the total *from which* selection is made is not a satisfactory rendering of the Greek,[2] particularly since this is already given by the prepositional phrase ἐξ ἑκάστης τῶν αἱρέσεων ('from each of the sects'). But it probably suffices to interpret τὰ ἀρέσαντα as referring to *his own* preferences rather than to sets of *placita* from the different sects. This gains support from the explanatory ἀρέσκει δ' αὐτῷ ('his view is') in the following sentence and so ἀρέσαντα can maintain its sense of 'tenets' as long as these are Potamo's own selected doctrines. LSJ favours the non-technical sense of ἀρέσκειν ('to appeal, be pleasing to someone'), s.v. ἐκλεκτικός: 'the Eclectics, philosophers who selected such doctrines as pleased them in every school'.

In the extract cited above, Diogenes Laertius testifies to Potamo's Alexandrian origin, which raises the question of his identification with the Potamo of the following *Suda* entry:[3]

Ποτάμων, Ἀλεξανδρεύς, φιλόσοφος, γεγονὼς πρὸ Αὐγούστου, καὶ μετ' αὐτόν. εἰς τὰς Πλάτωνος Πολιτείας ὑπόμνημα.

Potamo, a philosopher from Alexandria, who was active before and after the time of Augustus. [He wrote] a commentary on Plato's *Republics*. (*Suda* π 2126)

Potamo's floruit can be placed roughly in the Augustan period, 30 BC–AD 14,[4] if the Eclectic philosopher is identified with the Potamo

[2] The same problem confronted scholars in the interpretation of Heraclitus 22B129 DK on Pythagoras. See Huffman 2008: 34–5 with n. 41.

[3] The *Suda* under the heading αἵρεσις (αι 286) repeats a version of Diogenes' definitions and lists of philosophical sects, including the information on Potamo. The source of π 2126 must be different, however, probably the *Onomatologos* by Hesychius of Miletus, which is the main source for biographical information on literary figures (cf. η 611).

[4] The information of this entry may be slightly corrupt because, as Rohde pointed out, it appears to suggest that there was no activity by Potamo during the time of Augustus. Possible emendations include κατ' αὐτόν ('during his time', Rohde), μετ' αὐτοῦ ('with him', Schweighäuser), μετέπειτα ('later', Bernhardy), <τεθνηκώς> μετ' αὐτόν ('<died> after Augustus', Runia). See Rohde 1878: 166 with n. 1. Rohde examined all the instances of γέγονε and γεγονώς in the *Suda*, and identified eighty-eight certain cases where the meaning is 'was active' ('floruit'), whereas the meaning 'was born' is certain in only six cases. 'Floruit' is also possible in a further twenty-six cases. See also Fraser's note on the evidence for Potamo, Fraser 1972: II 710, and Adler's apparatus to the *Suda* entry.

of the *Suda*. The identification is accepted by several modern scholars, but doubts were raised by Hadot (1990), and subsequently by Rescigno (2001), the latter drawing attention to the references to a Potamo in Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle's *On the Heavens*.[5] Rescigno sought to distinguish the Eclectic philosopher mentioned by Diogenes from the Potamo of *Suda* π 2126, whom he identified with the one mentioned by Simplicius.[6] Both he and Hadot point out that it is not at all impossible for two philosophers named Potamo to have come from the same city within a period of two centuries or so, particularly since the name was not uncommon in Alexandria.[7] Canfora (1994) was also in favour of a late date for Potamo (contemporary with Diogenes), and used the reference to support his own argument about Diogenes addressing a specifically Alexandrian audience in the course of a polemical exchange with Clement of Alexandria. However, since we have no further information on either an Augustan or a later Imperial Potamo, it remains just as likely that we are dealing with only one person.

In fact, the case against the identification of the two Potamos rests primarily on Diogenes' expression πρὸ ὀλίγου ('a short while ago') which, if taken at face value, indicates a date in the late first or in the second century AD for the Eclectic philosopher, making it incompatible with the Augustan dating of the *Suda*.[8] However, one cannot exclude entirely the possibility that Diogenes is not speaking

[5] Simp. *In cael.* 606.33–607.6; 652.9–654.11; 655.28; on this material and its relation to Potamo's philosophical project see Chapter 5; Sharples 1990: 90 n. 56, in a brief acknowledgement of the Potamo citations in Simplicius' commentary, maintains the identification with the Eclectic philosopher. Thus also Mueller 2009: 154 n. 87.

[6] Rescigno 2001: 269–73.

[7] Rescigno 2001: 271 with n. 21; Hadot 1990: 149. For the question whether the name has a Greek etymology from ποταμός (probably with the Nile in mind in this case), or whether it is an Egyptian name, variant of Ποταμμων or Πεταμων, see Reynolds and Masson 1976: 94–5.

[8] There is also the point made by Rescigno 2001: 271, that the *Suda* article fails to mention what was arguably the Eclectic philosopher's most important work, the *Stoicheiosis*. But in the *Suda* the lists of authors' works are not exhaustive, nor do they concentrate on the most important items. The entry on Callimachus (κ 227) lists several titles of poems, but not the *Aetia*; in the case of Aristotle (α 3929) only the paean for Hermeias is mentioned. As far as more marginal authors are concerned, for whom fewer titles are available, one can point to the case of the lexicographer Diogenian: the *Periergopenetes* ('The curious poor') is absent from his *Suda* entry (δ 1140), even though it was his most influential work and the source for the lexicon of Hesychius.

in his own voice here, but has mechanically copied the expression from his source. If indeed there were such an intermediate source, it would probably be a doxographical work, judging from the information provided on standard central questions such as the criterion of truth and the moral end (see Chapter 4). This source would have to be different from and later than the Hellenistic authors such as Hippobotus (cf. D.L. 1.19) that Diogenes drew on for the other sects, and this would explain the unintegrated nature of the reference to Potamo. A kinder assessment of Diogenes is also possible and perhaps preferable, which does not require charging him with such clumsy and anachronistic borrowings. I refer to Mejer's suggestion that draws attention to Diogenes' antiquarian interests,[9] and provides a satisfactory explanation as to why Potamo might be called 'recent': the establishment of the Eclectic sect took place centuries later than that of the other sects discussed in Diogenes' proem, and is not considered as belonging to any ancient tradition or succession. We may compare the ἐχθὲς καὶ πρώην ('yesterday or the day before') used by Aristocles (late first century AD, Fr. 4.29 Chiesara) about Aenesidemus' activity in Alexandria (early first century BC), to highlight the lack of 'proper' tradition in the case of Pyrrhonism. A similar lack of tradition also characterises Potamo's Eclecticism. On this interpretation, Diogenes may even be reporting directly from Potamo's own work, and we do not need to posit a different post-Augustan doxographer.

Thus the appeal to the frequency of the name 'Potamo' in Alexandria and the significance of Diogenes' πρὸ ὀλίγου only show that there *could* have been two philosophers of the same name active in Alexandria at different times, without proving that this is more likely than Diogenes and the *Suda* referring to the same man. Even though we may never be entirely free from hypothetical reconstructions given the limitations of the available evidence, it will be helpful to explore further, in the light of the intellectual climate of first-century BC Alexandria as outlined above, whether the information provided by the *Suda*, i.e. that Potamo wrote a commentary on Plato and that he lived around the Augustan period, is compatible with the establishment of an Eclectic sect as described by Diogenes.

9 Mejer 1978: 55–6 with n. 123.

The explicit ascription of a commentary on Plato to Potamo the Eclectic would indeed make it a very rare instance of such a work by a philosopher who did not identify himself in any way with the Platonic/Academic tradition, because exegesis often goes hand in hand with an expression of philosophical allegiance. Even in terms of the Platonist tradition, Potamo's commentary in the Augustan period is the earliest specimen of the post-Hellenistic revival, particularly given the uncertainty surrounding the date of the anonymous commentator on the *Theaetetus*. But there is no need to connect Potamo to those who sought to establish Plato's *auctoritas*[10] especially if we accept, as Rescigno does, that the same author also worked closely on Aristotle's *On the Heavens*. Furthermore, we know of a number of non-Peripatetics who engaged in one way or another with the text of Aristotle from the first century BC onwards, including the Academic Eudorus (see above pp. 55–7) and the Stoics Athenodorus and Cornutus (Simp. *In Cat*. 18.28; 159.32). Therefore, drawing only on the information of the *Suda*, we cannot straightforwardly conclude that the Potamo discussed at π 2126 was a Platonist,[11] because he is earlier than the mainstream of Middle Platonist commentators, and was active in a period during which there are parallels for exegetical activity on texts from schools other than one's own.

Furthermore, it could be argued that eclecticism is compatible with a close study of earlier philosophical texts in the context of a scholarly tradition backed up by rich library resources (and here Potamo's Alexandrian background becomes significant). Thus we could perhaps trace his 'models' in the flourishing literary commentary tradition of his native Alexandria, where the grammarian Didymus was at the time producing commentaries on a range of Greek authors from Homer and Pindar to Demosthenes. I have already mentioned (see above p. 64) Theon of Alexandria's commentary on Apollodorus of Seleuceia, which can be more plausibly linked to the Alexandrian tradition of literary commentary than to any equivalent Stoic exegetical tradition, since there was no such thing.

In this connection, it is worth repeating that Potamo's name is associated with texts from both the Platonic and the Aristotelian traditions: the attribution of the references in Simplicius' *In Cael.*

[10] See Sedley 1997: 116–22. [11] As Hadot 1990: 149 does.

to the same Potamo who wrote a commentary on the *Republic* is compatible with a new philosophical project not identified with either school. This exegetical activity can be seen as the background to Potamo's eventual process of 'selecting from each sect' (ἐκλέγειν ἐξ ἑκάστης τῶν αἱρέσεων) the suitable doctrines in order to form his own system. Therefore, in the light of the considerations outlined above, while also acknowledging that the evidence is not conclusive, I will work with the hypothesis that Potamo the founder of the Eclectic sect is to be identified with the author of a commentary on Plato's *Republic*, who was active around Augustus' time, as well as with the author consulted by Simplicius or his source for the interpretation of certain passages of Aristotle's *On the Heavens*. In the course of this study there will be further opportunities to assess whether these identifications result in a coherent picture, particularly as far as the first-century BC date for the emergence of eclecticism as an independent school of thought is concerned.

POTAMO'S PLATONIC COMMENTARY

We know nothing about the content of Potamo's Platonic commentary, but the heading given by the *Suda* is of interest, because it suggests a title for Plato's work in the plural: εἰς τὰς Πλάτωνος Πολιτείας ὑπόμνημα ('Commentary on Plato's *Republics*'). That this is not a simple confusion or scribal error is confirmed by a series of parallels, including the *Suda* entries on two obscure Platonists, Onosander and Manaechmus.[12] One has to decide whether the *Suda* reflects here a late practice of referring to Plato's work in this way that was prevalent among Neoplatonists (cf. the title of Proclus' commentary, Εἰς τὰς Πλάτωνος Πολιτείας ὑπόμνημα[13]), or whether the subdivision into multiple 'Republics' is earlier, closer to Potamo's

[12] o 386: Ὀνόσανδρος, φιλόσοφος Πλατωνικός. Τακτικά, Περὶ στρατηγημάτων, Ὑπομνήματα εἰς τὰς Πλάτωνος Πολιτείας. Onosander can be dated under Claudius and Nero if he is identified with the Onasander who wrote the surviving *Strategikos*, but cf. Goulet s.v. 'Onosandros', *DPhA* IV, 782 for doubts about this identification; μ 140: Μάναιχμος, Ἀλωπεκοννήσιος, κατὰ δέ τινας Προκοννήσιος, φιλόσοφος Πλατωνικός. ἔγραψε φιλόσοφα· καὶ εἰς τὰς Πλάτωνος Πολιτείας βιβλία γ'.

[13] Cf. also the following reference in Marinus' *Life of Proclus* 334–6: καὶ δὴ καὶ τὰς πολιτικὰς [*sc.* ἀρετὰς] προσελάμβανεν ἔκ τε τῶν Ἀριστοτέλους πολιτικῶν συγγραμμάτων καὶ τῶν παρὰ τῷ Πλάτωνι Νόμων τε καὶ Πολιτειῶν.

time. The latter seems more likely, because Thrasyllus counted the ten books of the *Republic* as 'ten dialogues',[14] and Boethus, author of a Platonic lexicon with a *terminus ante quem* in the reign of Trajan, cited the 'fourth [book] of the *Republics*' (Πλάτων Πολιτειῶν τετάρτῳ, *Etymologicum genuinum* s.v. φαῦλον).[15] The information on Thrasyllus suggests that the plural refers to the work's different books; it is also possible, however, that an alternative title Πολιτεῖαι had arisen due to its content and the different political systems surveyed by Plato.[16]

As far as Potamo's choice of the *Republic* for commentary is concerned, we may point out that, apart from the obvious significance of this work, it had also enjoyed a special status in Alexandrian scholarship. Aristophanes of Byzantium placed it first in his list of Plato's works (in the first trilogy, followed by *Timaeus* and *Critias*, D.L. 3.61), and Aristarchus of Samothrace paid particular attention to linguistic issues arising from this work. As Schironi (2005) has argued, it is not unlikely that Aristarchus had actually produced a commentary of his own (of a more grammatical/stylistic rather than philosophical bent).[17]

POTAMO'S *ELEMENTARY TEACHING*

From Diogenes Laertius we learn the title of another work by Potamo, apparently the one in which he set out his fundamental doctrines. The title is *Stoicheiosis*, usually translated as *Elementary* or *Introductory Teaching* or *Primer*. This type of title is not unique among philosophical works, and it is also found in connection with particular branches of knowledge, as in Hierocles' *Elements of Ethics*. There are also references to Εὔδρομος ἐν τῇ Ἠθικῇ στοιχειώσει ('Eudromus in his *Elements of Ethics*', D.L. 7.39); Ποσειδώνιος ἐν τῇ Μετεωρολογικῇ στοιχειώσει ('Posidonius in his *Elements of Meteorology*', D.L. 7.138).

14 D.L. 3.56–7: Θράσυλλος δέ φησι [. . .] εἰσὶ τοίνυν, φησίν, οἱ πάντες αὐτῷ γνήσιοι διάλογοι ἓξ καὶ πεντήκοντα, τῆς μὲν Πολιτείας εἰς δέκα διαιρουμένης . . .

15 See Dyck 1985: 76 for the identity of this Boethus, and 83 for the attribution of the *Etymologicum genuinum* gloss to him.

16 On the general question of the plural *Republics* and its meaning see also Dörrie and Baltes 1993: 203–4.

17 Schironi's paper brings to attention new fragments from Aristarchus' pronouncements on Platonic expressions occurring at *Rep.* 327b7, 327c6, 414e7, 568a8.

Stoicheiosis was also an alternative way of referring to Euclid's *Elements* (*Stoicheia*).[18] It seems that it was more generally used as a description of introductory (or perceived as introductory) works even if it was not the actual title chosen by the author or first editor: εἰκότως Κατηγορίας ἐπέγραψεν τὴν περὶ τῶν ἁπλῶν λέξεων στοιχείωσιν ('he reasonably entitled the introductory teaching on simple words *Categories*', Porph. *In Cat.* 58); αἱ μακραὶ στοιχειώσεις Αἰνησιδήμου ('the long elementary introductions of Aenesidemus', Aristocles in Eus. *PE* 14.18.16 = Fr. 4 Chiesara).[19] Proclus volunteers an analysis of the meaning of *stoicheiosis* with respect to Euclid in his commentary on the great mathematician (Procl. *In Euc.* pp. 71–5 Friedlein). His view that the author of such a treatise must carefully select the fundamental ideas/propositions in his field may offer some insight into the nature of Potamo's eclectic project and the role played by didactic concerns in any such enterprise:

> ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο χαλεπὸν καὶ τὸ ἐκλέξασθαι καὶ τάξαι κατὰ τρόπον τὰ στοιχεῖα καθ' ἑκάστην ἐπιστήμην, ἀφ' ὧν τὰ ἄλλα προάγεται πάντα καὶ εἰς ἃ τὰ ἄλλα ἀναλύεται.
>
> It is a difficult task to select and arrange properly in each science the elements out of which all other matters are produced and into which they can be resolved. (Procl. *In Euc.* p. 73 Friedlein)

A similar project to that of Euclid and perhaps also his fourth-century predecessors was envisaged by Epicurus, as Clay has shown, when he adopted a new format for philosophical exposition aimed at making ideas more memorable without getting into polemical tangles, as he explains in the *Letter to Herodotus* (*Ep. Hdt.* 35).[20] It is particularly significant that he speaks of this enterprise in terms of 'summary and elementary exposition': ἐποίησά σοι καὶ τοιαύτην τινὰ ἐπιτομὴν καὶ στοιχείωσιν τῶν ὅλων δοξῶν ('I have drawn up for you an elementary presentation of my general doctrines in the form of an epitome', *Ep. Hdt.* 37). This process of securing and systematising

[18] Cf. Vitrac *DPhA* III, 261–2. Also Aristoxenus' Ἁρμονικὰ στοιχεῖα is cited as Ἁρμονικὴ στοιχείωσις by Proclus (*In Tim.* II 169 Diehl).

[19] Chiesara 2001: 127 thinks the term is here nearly synonymous with 'outlines' (ὑποτυπώσεις); she translates 'elementary expositions' or 'fundamental elements', and points to the oxymoron of μακραὶ στοιχειώσεις.

[20] Cf. Clay 1998: 8–9.

the essentials of his thought was undertaken by Epicurus in his *Letters* and *Principal Doctrines* (surviving thanks to Diogenes Laertius, cf. 10.29),[21] as well as in a series of *Twelve Stoicheioseis* (Δώδεκα στοιχειώσεις) which must have formed a separate work, according to a scholion on *Ep. Hdt.* 44: τὸ δὲ χρῶμα παρὰ τὴν θέσιν τῶν ἀτόμων ἀλλάττεσθαι ἐν ταῖς Δώδεκα στοιχειώσεσί φησι ('but he says in the *Twelve Stoicheioseis* that colour varies by the position of the atoms').[22]

These parallels for the type of work that is characterised as a *sticheiosis* lead us to expect a similar format for Potamo's book, namely a series of concise and consolidated doctrines, perhaps presented in the form of simplified and memorable propositions followed by discussion/explanation. As Clay put it, a *stoicheiosis* consists in 'reducing a complex mass of doctrine to the elementary simplicity and integrity of its constituent and basic conceptions'.[23] In Epicurus' case, this mass of doctrine was his own; in Potamo's it included ideas and concepts from all the philosophical schools.

POTAMO'S SCHOOL ASPIRATIONS AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Potamo's introduction of a self-proclaimed eclectic system is naturally the most significant piece of information about him, especially given the heavy use of the term in modern scholarship to describe philosophical developments from the first century BC onwards. But it is also worth considering the entity to which the characterisation 'eclectic' is applied: it is described by Diogenes as an Eclectic *sect* (Ἐκλεκτικὴ αἵρεσις), a final addition to his discussion of philosophical sects. Glucker has emphasised that the term *hairesis* is not used in Greek to refer explicitly to an institution such as the Athenian schools of the Hellenistic period, but means rather 'school of thought', 'persuasion'.[24] Diogenes' definitions shortly before the reference to Potamo corroborate this (D.L. 1.20): αἵρεσιν μὲν γὰρ λέγομεν τὴν λόγῳ τινὶ κατὰ τὸ φαινόμενον ἀκολουθοῦσαν ἢ δοκοῦσαν ἀκολουθεῖν ('for we call *hairesis* the following or appearing to follow a certain rationale according to apparent facts'); εἰ δὲ

[21] Clay 1998: 16. [22] For the content of these propositions see Clay 1998: 11–12.
[23] Clay 1998: 13. [24] Glucker 1978: 166–92.

αἵρεσιν νοοῖμεν πρόσκλισιν δόγμασιν ἀκολουθίαν ἔχουσιν . . . ('but if we were to understand by *hairesis* the inclination towards a coherent set of doctrines . . .').[25] Talking in terms of 'philosophical persuasions' or 'affiliations' is more appropriate to the state of affairs from the first century BC onwards, when there was a breakdown in the institutional structure of the Athenian Schools, while the philosophy that originated there remained influential.

Under these circumstances, it is hard to establish the exact status of Potamo's system within the history of first-century BC philosophy. Clearly he did not subscribe to any of the existing schools or groups/sects; but the use of the term *hairesis* does not allow us to make assumptions about a new Alexandrian 'school' with specific premises, hierarchy etc. There is not even a way of knowing whether Potamo ever persuaded anyone of the validity of his system or whether he had any dedicated followers or successors. All we can assume is that this must have been his aim when he rejected the existing sects in order to propose his own alternative.

There is, on the other hand, a valuable piece of evidence testifying to Potamo's activity and recognition as a representative of his own sect outside his native Alexandria: an inscription from Ephesus commemorates the honour bestowed upon an 'Eclectic philosopher from Alexandria', which means that this person was considered to have provided important services to the city of Ephesus.[26] The inscription is of uncertain date, and an important obstacle to a precise dating is the fact that it was not found in its original location and archaeological context, but had been used as building material for the early Christian basilica of St John at Ephesus.[27] It cannot, therefore, be adduced as evidence in dating Potamo's activity, but the first century AD is a plausible hypothesis.[28] The Greek words for 'Alexandrian', 'philosopher' and 'Eclectic' have been safely restored from the inscription;

[25] Diogenes must be indebted here to the Pyrrhonist tradition (cf. S.E. *PH* I.16–17), and his point is that scepticism would be a *hairesis* according to the first definition, but not according to the second. On the broader significance of this for the status of scepticism see Polito 2007: 334–7.

[26] *Die Inschriften von Ephesos* III 789, discussed by Runia 1988: 241–2.

[27] The editors' comment on the matter is: 'An der Westseite der Johanneskirche verbaut.'

[28] Horsley 1987: 71 characterises it as 'Imperial' without comment.

therefore there can be little objection to supplying Potamo's name from the surviving initial pi as Runia (1988) proposed:

ἡ βουλὴ [καὶ ὁ δῆμος]
ἐτίμησαν Π[οτάμωνα
Ἀλεξανδρέα, ἀπὸ [τοῦ Μουσείου]
[φ]ιλόσοφον Ἐγλεκ̣[τικόν][29]

The Boule [and the people] honoured P[otamo] of Alexandria, an Eclectic philosopher from [the Museum].

This inscription provides valuable information on cultural practices in Potamo's time, especially on the prestige and honour philosophers could achieve while on 'lecture tours' away from their home cities. The recurrence of the term Ἐγλεκτικός for 'Eclectic' in this inscription is remarkable, and confirms that it was part of Potamo's self-presentation rather than a later classification reflected in Diogenes Laertius. The specification of a philosopher's *hairesis* as an aspect of his identity that was important enough to be included in a brief honorary inscription has several parallels, notably in the case of the Platonic philosopher Ofellius Laetus, who was also honoured by the people of Ephesus (*IEph* VII.2 3901, line 1: Ὀφέλλιον Λαῖτον Πλατωνικὸν φιλόσ[οφον]).[30] Such descriptions are also found in inscriptions of later Imperial date, e.g. [Σαραπίων]α Χολλείδην – – | [– – – φι]λόσοφον Στωικ[όν] (*IG* II^2 3796, Attica, 1–2 AD).[31] It seems that lecture tours similar to Potamo's were not unheard of in the Hellenistic period either, as is indicated by a decree from Samos (about 200 BC) conferring citizenship upon the Peripatetic Epicrates who had taught there and did not charge the poorer members of his audience.[32] This parallel, along with the public nature of Potamo's honouring, suggests that his intended audience included all who belonged to the *demos* rather than a select educated elite.

29 It is common for κ at the end of the preposition ἐκ to be assimilated to the type of consonant that followed, i.e. voiced or aspirated. By Potamo's time ἐκ had started to be written before voiced initials, but this was a normative spelling not representing actual pronunciation. Cf. Allen 1974: 15. Other similar examples from the collection of Ephesus inscriptions are: ἐγδημία (VI 2005. 9); ἐγμαρτυρῆσαι, ἐγ δέ . . . (V 1678, Fr. B1).

30 Runia 1988: 242–3 makes the point that if this Laetus is identified with the Λαῖτος of Plutarch's *Aetia Physica* (911F–912A; 913E), then we have an important early instance of the term Πλατωνικός in a philosopher's self-definition.

31 For more see Tod 1957: 134 and passim.

32 Cf. Scholz 2004: 332–6.

While the restoration of the word Ἐγλεκ̣[τικόν] ('Eclectic') and of Potamo's name (Π[οτάμωνα) in the text of the inscription is fairly safe, the supplement [τοῦ Μουσείου] ('from [the Museum]') does not seem as straightforward. It was proposed in the provisional *editio princeps* of Engelman, Knibbe and Merkelbach[33] and has been adopted without comment by all subsequent republications of the inscription. Presumably the editors based their reconstruction on parallel instances of φιλόσοφος ἀπὸ τοῦ Μουσείου ('philosopher from the Museum') or similar, most of which are of Imperial date and reflect the practice of bestowing honorary membership of the Museum upon distinguished members of society who often were not philosophers at all.[34] Some characteristic examples read as follows:

(i) τὸ μνῆμα Αἰλίου Διονυσίου [φι]λοσόφου ἀπὸ Μουσείου [καὶ τ]ῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ ('In memory of Aelius Dionysius, a philosopher of the Museum, and his wife', *BCH* 4 405, Halicarnassus, probably first century AD).

(ii) Διοφάντου ὑοῦ, [-]ίου τοῦ ἀπὸ Μουσείου [?φιλοσόφο]υ, ἱερέως τῶν θεῶν ('Diophantus the son of . . . a philosopher from the Museum, priest to the gods', *SIG* 900.53, Stratonicea, AD 305–13).[35]

(iii) τῶν [ἐν τῶι] | Μουσείωι σιτουμέ[νων ἀτελῶν] | Πλατωνικὸν φιλό[σοφον] ('Platonic philosopher, exempt from taxes and receiving sustenance at the Museum', *SB* 6012, Antinoe, probably third century AD).[36]

Even though there are plausible alternatives, no other restoration can be shown to have an overwhelming advantage over 'from [the Museum]'; a patronymic beginning with Ἀπο- (e.g. Ἀπολλοδώρου) might suggest itself, but it would be more naturally placed after the subject's name and before his city of origin. Another possibility would be to supply Ἀλεξανδρέα ἀπὸ [Αἰγύπτου] ('Alexandrian

[33] They discuss the provisional nature of their work in the Introduction to *Die Inschriften von Ephesos* II.

[34] See Lewis 1963: 258.

[35] This is the reverse case from the inscription on our Eclectic philosopher: editors here have supplied the word φιλοσόφου from a final υ, based on the reference to a *Mouseion*, acknowledging that the reference could be to another type of intellectual, e.g. [ἰατρο]ῦ.

[36] Cf. Tod 1957: 138.

from [Egypt]'), which would serve to distinguish Potamo's home city from the nearer (to Ephesos) Alexandria in the Troad. One may compare Πολύαινος Πολυαίνου Ἀλεξανδρεὺς ἀπὸ Αἰγύπτου ('Polyaenus the son of Polyaenus, Alexandrian from Egypt', *SIG* 585, 318, from Delphi); or Ἀρκὰς Ἀλεξανδρεὺς τῆς ἀπὸ Τρωάδος ('Arcas from Alexandria in the Troad', from a third-century BC contract preserved on papyrus, *CPR* 18.18.368). There is no decisive evidence to help us rule categorically in favour of this or the editors' restoration, but if the latter is accepted, it will have interesting implications for Potamo's 'institutional affiliations'. It may suggest that one does not have to look for exclusively philosophical institutions in Alexandria, and that philosophers were considered part of the intellectual community of the Museum, enjoying the prestige associated with that tradition.[37] Alternatively, we could interpret the reference as part of Potamo's 'curriculum vitae', in the sense that he had studied in that celebrated institution.

To conclude this introductory examination of the evidence on Potamo's life and work, it will suffice to draw together the limited information that has been extracted so far. Much depends on the identification of Potamo the Eclectic (mentioned by Diogenes Laertius) with the commentator on Plato who lived in the Augustan period according to the *Suda*, and with Simplicius' (probably indirectly accessed) source for some material pertaining to Aristotle's *On the Heavens*. Apart from these exegetical activities he had also written a more general work, whose title *Stoicheiosis* indicates a strategy of selecting and systematising the more fundamental points of doctrine in summary form. This work must have been central in Potamo's introduction of a new Eclectic sect, clearly marked off from the other sects. He seems to have backed this up with journeys and probably lectures away from his native Alexandria, since in the Ephesus inscription his characterisation as an Eclectic is a central part of his identity and his honouring.

[37] On two occasions in Athenaeus philosophers are treated as members of the Museum establishment: at 4.184c they are included in the list of those exiled by Ptolemy VIII alongside grammarians, doctors, musicians etc.; and at 1.22d he says that Timon's famous satire of the 'cloistered bookworms' (*SH* 689) refers to philosophers (ὅτι τὸ Μουσεῖον ὁ Φιλιάσιος Τίμων ὁ σιλλογράφος τάλαρόν πού φησιν ἐπισκώπτων τοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ τρεφομένους φιλοσόφους).

Thus Potamo emerges as the only thinker who can be credited with being the first to apply the term 'eclectic' to a distinct school of thought. It is therefore all the more important to explore what his understanding of the term was and what the resulting philosophy might have been. For this we are entirely dependent on Diogenes Laertius (1.21), who described Potamo's system as a selection of doctrines from all the existing sects: ἐκλεξαμένου τὰ ἀρέσαντα ἐξ ἑκάστης τῶν αἱρέσεων ('having selected his doctrines from each of the sects'). In the first instance, this leads one to expect that every sect will be somehow represented in Potamo's system. But Diogenes offers an extremely brief outline, whose contents cannot always be straightforwardly mapped onto specific known tenets. This is why any interpretation of Potamo's views must go beyond simply identifying sources, and turn to examining what the particular selections and combinations can tell us about the nature of the eclecticism that Potamo espoused.

CHAPTER 4

The eclectic system of Potamo's Elementary Teaching

Diogenes Laertius offers a very brief overview of Potamo's doctrines, based on the traditional division of philosophy into logic (where epistemology played a central role), physics and ethics (compare D.L. 7.39–41, with reference to the Stoics). Within this scheme, the short report concentrates on Potamo's responses to the central issues on which one needed to articulate a position in order to declare allegiance to a particular school or venture a claim of doctrinal originality: the criterion of truth (epistemology); the first principles (physics); and the moral end (ethics).[1] The few lines from Diogenes have to provide the bulk of our evidence for an assessment of Potamo's eclecticism and the type of approach to preceding philosophical traditions that this (self-) characterisation implies.

Recalling the programmatic report that Potamo 'selected the doctrines (i.e. his doctrines) from each of the sects', important questions that will come under consideration include (i) Which sects are understood in the rather vague expression 'each of the sects'? (ii) Does Potamo select ideas from each of these equally, or is he influenced by some more than by others? (iii) Should we imagine his *Stoicheiosis* as an anthology of 'approved' (ἀρέσαντα) doctrines simply listed side by side, or as an attempt to make something out of the selected ideas by drawing connections and correlations? The information that Potamo was not simply a historian of philosophy but had introduced his own sect, which would require a programmatically distinct intellectual attitude of some sort, already points towards the latter option.

[1] Cf. Cic. *Luc.* 29 (on behalf of Antiochus): *etenim duo esse haec maxima in philosophia, iudicium veri et finem bonorum, nec sapientem posse esse qui aut cognoscendi initium esse ignoret aut extremum expetendi.* The same issues dictated the organisation of doxographical texts.

I EPISTEMOLOGY (LOGIC)

ἀρέσκει δ' αὐτῷ, καθά φησιν ἐν τῇ Στοιχειώσει, κριτήρια τῆς ἀληθείας εἶναι τὸ μὲν ὡς ὑφ' οὗ γίνεται ἡ κρίσις, τουτέστι τὸ ἡγεμονικόν· τὸ δὲ ὡς δι' οὗ, οἷον τὴν ἀκριβεστάτην φαντασίαν.

He believes, as he says in the *Elementary Teaching*, that the criteria of truth are, on the one hand, [the criterion] in the sense of 'that by whose agency' the judgement is made, namely the ruling part [of the soul]; on the other hand, [the criterion] in the sense of 'that through which' [judgement is made], such as the most accurate impression. (D.L. 1.21)

THE HELLENISTIC BACKGROUND TO POTAMO'S CRITERION OF TRUTH

It would be useful to begin this survey with a brief overview of the developments in Hellenistic accounts of the criterion of truth. Potamo's response should be understood in the context of these debates, because they represent the emergence of the criterion as a fundamental issue for philosophy. Its priority became pronounced in the Hellenistic period as the dogmatic schools sought to respond to the sceptical challenge laid down by Pyrrho and Arcesilaus. They tried to establish a secure starting point and basis for beliefs about human nature and the world, which would provide a guarantee that knowledge is in fact possible.[2] It is important to consider the extent to which Potamo is indebted to the resulting Stoic and/or Epicurean formulations, and whether his view reflects developments and refinements within those schools. Some scholars (see below) have identified particular Stoic affinities, but it will be shown in due course that Plato's *Theaetetus*, too, forms a crucial part of the background.

In their bid to show that knowledge is possible, Epicureans and Stoics went beyond a simple appeal to human faculties and abilities and their function as means for judging truth and falsehood (this appeal being what Striker considers 'the philosophically least interesting usage' of the word *kriterion*).[3] This was the sense in which Plato employed the term in the *Republic* (where good judgement depends on experience, wisdom and argument): τίνι χρὴ κρίνεσθαι

[2] Long 1988: 181. [3] Striker 1996b: 151.

τὰ μέλλοντα καλῶς κριθήσεσθαι; ἆρ᾽ οὐκ ἐμπειρίᾳ τε καὶ φρονήσει καὶ λόγῳ; ἢ τούτων ἔχοι ἄν τις βέλτιον κριτήριον; 'by what means should we make judgements if we are to judge well? Is it not by experience and good sense and reason? Or could one have a better criterion?' (*R.* 9.582a4–6). In the *Theaetetus*, Protagoras' man-as-measure possesses within him the criterion/ability to judge the things he comes into contact with: 'πάντων μέτρον ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν,' ὡς φατέ, ὦ Πρωταγόρα, λευκῶν βαρέων κούφων, οὐδενὸς ὅτου οὐ τῶν τοιούτων· ἔχων γὰρ αὐτῶν τὸ κριτήριον ἐν αὑτῷ, οἷα πάσχει τοιαῦτα οἰόμενος, ἀληθῆ τε οἴεται αὑτῷ καὶ ὄντα, '"Man is the measure of all things" according to you and your followers, Protagoras, of things which are white, heavy, light, and everything of this sort; since he has in himself the criterion about these matters, when he thinks that things are the way he experiences them, he thinks that they are true and existing for himself' (*Tht.* 178b3–7). The same sense of a criterion as human faculty or ability also applies to Aristotle's 'critical faculty' (δύναμις κριτική, *APo.* 2.19.99b35).[4]

Epicurus spoke of the criterion in a further sense, that of a secure independent standard conceived on the analogy of a straightedge (cf. the title *Ruler* or Κανών for Epicurus' epistemological work), which can be used to test the truth of beliefs and propositions, just as the straightedge tests the straightness of other objects.[5] This meant pointing to the self-evidence (ἐνάργεια) and reliability of sensations, preconceptions and feelings (D.L. 10.31; Epicur. *Ep. Hdt.* 82), and developing a theory of how, given these primitive instances of knowledge which are not beliefs, one can arrive through inference at further knowledge.[6]

The Stoics shared with Epicurus the requirement for something besides faculties or abilities, but focused on the process by which one can gain access to what is evident in the first place, rather than on the use of self-evident truths as standards for comparison.[7] Thus they introduced the criterion of the 'cognitive impression' (καταληπτικὴ φαντασία) which was defined as containing an internal differentiating feature which provides the guarantee that it represents its source

4 See Striker 1996a: 26–7.

5 Striker 1996a: 31–3.

6 Striker 1996a: 51; she also points out that while the appeal to sensations and feelings is compatible with the criterion in the sense of cognitive faculty, this does not apply to preconceptions (1996a: 31).

7 Striker 1996a: 51–2, 1996b: 158; Frede 1983: 82.

as it really is, and thus has a causal effect on the mind, normally leading to the percipient's assent (cf. e.g. Cic. *Ac.* 1.40–1; *Luc.* 38; S.E. *M.* 7.252).[8] The acquisition of criterial knowledge therefore, for the Stoics, was a non-inferential, natural process.

As far as Potamo is concerned, we should first point out that by positing a criterion of truth at all he automatically aligns himself and his Eclectic sect more with the dogmatists than with the sceptics or those thinkers who 'abolished the criterion' (ἀνεῖλον τὸ κριτήριον, S.E. *M.* 7.47 and *passim*). Secondly, it is apparent that Potamo's terminology owes more to the Stoics than to the Epicureans or the other earlier traditions: the 'governing part' of the soul (ἡγεμονικόν) was the Stoic term for the centre of all mental functions, which controls everything from perception to intentional action. Moreover, 'impression' (φαντασία) had been in use as a technical term for the Stoic notion of a perceptual or non-perceptual thought or impression that is 'present to the mind',[9] and the Stoic criterion was also a particular class of impression as we saw above. What is new and different with Potamo is the duality in his description of the criterion of truth: κριτήρια (plural), τὸ μέν . . . τὸ δέ ('on the one hand . . . on the other hand'). As far as Stoic orthodoxy is concerned the criterion was one, namely the cognitive impression. Its status as an ideal criterion was not denied even by the Stoics' Academic rivals, only they found it unachievable, and focused their challenge on the difficulties of distinguishing cognitive from false impressions.[10]

Nevertheless, Potamo's Stoic terminology has led scholars to the opinion that the concept of a criterion with more than one aspect must have had some prehistory within Stoicism.[11] It is therefore necessary to consider how far Potamo's bipartition may be due to Stoic ideas. This means examining any evidence suggesting that the Stoics themselves realised that the cognitive impression could not account for all the ways in which we gain cognitive access to the world around us, and that they sought to acknowledge the contribution of the mind to the process. We may thus consider passages where the mind's active role in receiving and processing impressions is

[8] Frede 1983: 77–8, 83. [9] Long 1999: 575.

[10] Cf. Striker 1996a: 25: 'the Stoics and Academics seem to have been in agreement about what conditions a criterion of truth ought to fulfil'.

[11] Striker 1996a: 68–9, 71 (where Posidonius' Περὶ κριτηρίου is suggested as a possible source for Potamo); Brunschwig 1988: 161; Long 1988: 186–7, 1978: 36 with n. 14.

emphasised, such as Cic. *Luc.* 30: *mens enim ipsa, quae sensuum fons est atque etiam ipsa sensus est, naturalem vim habet quam intendit ad ea quibus movetur* ('for the mind itself, which is the source of the senses, and is even itself identical to the senses, has a natural power which it directs at the things by which it is moved').[12] There is also evidence for concern among later Stoics about obstacles that might arise in the mind and have a detrimental effect even on impressions that come about from real objects (e.g. abnormality or false beliefs, cf. Cic. *Luc.* 53; S.E. *M.* 7. 424, 402–7).[13] This led them to add the specification μηδὲν ἔχουσαν ἔνστημα ('one which has no obstacle') to the definition of the cataleptic impression.

Moreover, Diogenes Laertius gives a report of dissent among Stoics on the number of criteria:

κριτήριον δὲ τῆς ἀληθείας φασὶ τυγχάνειν τὴν καταληπτικὴν φαντασίαν, τουτέστι τὴν ἀπὸ ὑπάρχοντος, καθά φησι Χρύσιππος ἐν τῇ δευτέρᾳ τῶν Φυσικῶν καὶ Ἀντίπατρος καὶ Ἀπολλόδωρος. ὁ μὲν γὰρ Βόηθος κριτήρια πλείονα ἀπολείπει, νοῦν καὶ αἴσθησιν καὶ ὄρεξιν καὶ ἐπιστήμην· ὁ δὲ Χρύσιππος διαφερόμενος πρὸς αὑτὸν ἐν τῷ πρώτῳ Περὶ λόγου κριτήριά φησιν εἶναι αἴσθησιν καὶ πρόληψιν· ἔστι δ' ἡ πρόληψις ἔννοια φυσικὴ τῶν καθόλου. ἄλλοι δέ τινες τῶν ἀρχαιοτέρων Στωϊκῶν τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον κριτήριον ἀπολείπουσιν, ὡς ὁ Ποσειδώνιος ἐν τῷ Περὶ κριτηρίου φησί.

They say that the cataleptic impression is the criterion of truth, i.e. the impression arising from something that is, according to what Chrysippus says in the second book of his *Physics*, and to Antipater and Apollodorus. Boethus, though, allows a number of criteria, intellect and sense perception and desire and [scientific] knowledge. And Chrysippus contradicts himself in the first book of his *On reason*, saying that sense-perception and preconception are the criteria, preconception being a natural conception of general notions (universals). And some others of the older Stoics admit right reason as the criterion, as Posidonius says in his *On the criterion*. (D.L. 7.54)

Here Boethus admits intellect, sense perception, desire and scientific knowledge as criteria of truth, while Chrysippus is said to contradict himself (διαφερόμενος πρὸς αὑτόν) by proposing sense perception and preconception instead of the cognitive impression. Posidonius,

[12] For parallel instances of this qualified identification of mind and senses in the *hegemonikon* see Brittain 2006: 20 n. 39.

[13] Cf. Frede 1983: 80. The distinction between 'expert' and 'non-expert' impressions (D.L. 7.51) is a further indication of the impact the mind can have upon the nature of impressions according to the Stoics.

on the other hand, had his own peculiar interpretation of the history of philosophical opinion concerning the possibility of secure knowledge, and he seems to have united a number of philosophers who made no explicit pronouncements on the criterion of truth under the generic banner of 'right reason' (ὀρθὸς λόγος). Thus we should not necessarily believe that there were any early Stoics who actually appealed to right reason as an (aspect of the) criterion.[14]

The evidence discussed so far shows that there was a range of opinions and a willingness to reconsider the criterion within the Stoa. However, it does not mean that Potamo's bipartition into agent and instrument was a direct result of these particular developments. The fact remains that the distinction between agent and instrument as such is not paralleled in any surviving Stoic text. Of the Stoic reconsiderations examined here, Chrysippus' 'self-contradictory' views in his *On Reason* do not depart from the unitary conception of the criterion because both mental functions mentioned there (sense perception and preconception) are ultimately based on and consist in cognitive impressions.[15] The introduction of these mental functions does not mean that Chrysippus was offering an explanation of how the mind may get involved in testing whether particular impressions are cognitive or not, a test that the Stoics had been notoriously unable to offer when challenged by the Academics. Rather, Chrysippus' appeal to preconceptions brings him closer to the Epicurean view of the criterion as a yardstick, which uses self-evident truths to judge the content of further, non-evident, propositions.[16] As far as Boethus' suggestions are concerned, it is quickly apparent that they are consistent with the older tradition of identifying different cognitive faculties as the contexts within which the distinction between true and false is made, without postulating a primary criterion of truth as the starting point for all belief.[17] This leads to the suspicion that Boethus may not have spoken explicitly of a criterion of truth, at least not in the predominant Stoic sense, and that we are dealing

[14] Long and Sedley 1987: II 243. Cf. Kidd 1989 and Sedley 1992, esp. 33.

[15] Cf. Long and Sedley 1987: I 252–3.

[16] Striker 1996a: 59–65.

[17] Cf. Striker 1996a: 26–7: 'The "criteria" which Diogenes Laertius ascribes to the Stoic Boethus are obviously criteria in the sense of cognitive faculties (with the exception of ὄρεξις, which presumably belongs to ethics): ὀρθὸς λόγος – which, according to Posidonius, some of the earlier Stoics named as a criterion – should presumably be interpreted in the same way.'

here with a later historical (re)interpretation and extrapolation, along the lines of Posidonius' claim about 'right reason'. These identifications of mental faculties as criteria may be compared with Potamo's specification of a criterion-as-agent, but they do not suggest a clear Stoic prehistory for a systematic articulation of the agent alongside the instrument of judgement.

It has also been suggested that a stronger Stoic pedigree for Potamo's distinction between agent and instrument emerges if we interpret it as a clarification/systematisation of the entire *katalepsis* process, which consists of assent to a cognitive impression. As Long put it, 'the distinction between agent and instrument clarifies this relationship by indicating that well-founded judgement is an act of the intellect using cognitive impressions as its instrumental standard'.[18] This is indeed a viable interpretation of the workings of Stoic epistemology, and one could even venture the speculation that Potamo himself interpreted his Stoic sources in this way, but there is no evidence for any Stoic philosopher articulating *the criterion of truth* through this distinction. In fact, as Striker has shown, texts referring to Stoic *katalepsis* as the criterion of truth (Cic. *Ac.*1.42; S.E. *M.* 7.150–5) go back to Zeno and are more compatible with the alternative Epicurean sense of the criterion as yardstick (κανών).[19] Therefore we do have here a different approach to the criterion, but one that focuses only on the 'instrumental'/yardstick aspect, without making Potamo's agent/instrument distinction.

Moreover, there are question marks as to whether Potamo's identification of the governing part of the soul and the most accurate impression as the agent and instrument of the criterion respectively is consistent with mainstream Stoicism, since an impression was defined by the Stoics as an 'imprint on' or a 'modification of' the governing part (τύπωσιν ἐν ἡγεμονικῷ, S.E. *PH* 2.70; ἑτεροίωσις ἐν ἡγεμονικῷ *M.* 7.234). Sextus also reports the disagreement between Cleanthes and Chrysippus on the interpretation of Zeno's definition of the impression as 'an imprinting on the soul' (τύπωσις ἐν ψυχῇ), *M.* 7.228 ff.; 372–3. This way of thinking about the nature of

[18] Long 1988: 187.
[19] See Striker 1996a: 58–9, 66, clarifying the distinction between κανὼν τῆς ἐπιστήμης and κριτήριον τῆς ἀληθείας.

impressions results in a passive role for the soul and its ruling part, making it incompatible with Potamo's agent (see also S.E. *M*. 7.239; D.L. 7.49).[20]

A further question of terminology has to do with the extent to which Potamo's 'most accurate impression' (ἀκριβεστάτη φαντασία) corresponds to the cognitive impression (καταληπτικὴ φαντασία). The term 'accurate' does not seem to be among the standard epithets associated with impressions in the mainstream epistemological discourse of the Hellenistic period.[21] The requirement for accuracy plays a part only in descriptions of the efforts made by the perceiving subject to achieve 'cataleptic' (for the younger Stoics, S.E. *M*. 7.258)[22] or 'more persuasive' impressions (for Carneades, S.E. *M*. 7.186; *PH* 1.228).[23] Galen also refers to accuracy as the desirable effect of the operation of a criterion of truth, something the Academics did away with: τὸ μηδὲν εἶναι κριτήριον ἀνθρώπῳ δεδομένον ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως, ᾧ παραβάλλων ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων ἀκριβῶς διαγνώσεται ('[they taught] that no criterion has been given to man by nature, to use as standard for comparing each thing and discerning it accurately', *Opt.Doct.* 1 43–4 K).[24]

The anonymous commentator on the *Theaetetus* speaks of accuracy as a desirable feature of the criterion itself, which he describes in instrumental terms, but does not connect it with any type of impression:

20 Frede 1983: 68: 'a rational impression is a passive affection of the mind, though it does involve the operation of the mind'; even the awareness of whether an impression is cognitive or not comes about through its particular causal effects on our minds, *op. cit.* 83. Cf. Ioppolo 1990: 433–4.

21 Accuracy appears as a factor in much later discussions of the distinction between αἴσθησις, φαντασία and δόξα/διάνοια in Aristotle's *De an.* 3.427b–428b: Simp. *In De an.* 209.33; 214.20–3; Alex. Aphr. *De an.* 67.9; Phlp. *In De an.* 500.13–16.

22 πᾶς ἄνθρωπος, ὅταν τι σπουδάζῃ μετὰ ἀκριβείας καταλαμβάνεσθαι, τὴν τοιαύτην φαντασίαν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ μεταδιώκειν φαίνεται.

23 τῷ μέντοι περισκοπήσαντι ἀκριβῶς καὶ διεξοδεύσαντι τὰ περὶ αὐτό, οἷον ὅτι οὐ κινεῖται, ὅτι τὸ χρῶμα τοῖόν ἐστι, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἕκαστον, φαίνεται σχοινίον κατὰ τὴν φαντασίαν τὴν πιθανὴν καὶ περιωδευμένην (*PH* 1.228). Sextus reports the following 'degrees of persuasiveness' for Carneades' criterion for action: πιθανὴ [φαντασία]; πιθανὴ ἅμα καὶ ἀπερίσπαστος; ἔτι καὶ διεξωδευμένη (*M*. 7.173–82). On the coherence tests proposed by Carneades, and the response of the younger Stoics, see Brittain 2001: 100–2.

24 The requirement for accuracy seems to be particularly prominent in scientific contexts; cf. Hp. *VM* 9: μέτρον δὲ, οὐδὲ σταθμὸν, οὐδὲ ἀριθμὸν οὐδένα ἄλλον, πρὸς ὃ ἀναφέρων εἴσῃ τὸ ἀκριβὲς, οὐκ ἂν εὑροίης ἀλλ' ἢ τοῦ σώματος τὴν αἴσθησιν.

λέγω δὲ | νῦ̣ν̣ κρ̣ιτ̣ήριον τὸ [δ]ι' | οὗ κ̣ρ̣ί̣νομεν ὡς ὀρ[γ]ά|ν̣ο̣υ̣. [δ]εῖ γὰρ ἔχειν ᾧ | κρ̣ι̣ν̣ο̣ῦμεν τὰ πρά|γματα. εἶ̣τα, ὅταν ἀκρ̣ι̣|βὲς ᾖ̣ τοῦτο, ἡ τῶν κ̣α̣|λ̣ῶ̣ς κριθέντων μό|ν̣ι̣μ̣ος παραδο̣χὴ γί|ν̣[ε]τ̣[α]ι ἐπιστ̣ή̣μ̣η̣.

What I mean now by 'criterion' is that through which we judge as through an instrument. For we need to have something by which to judge things. Then, when this is accurate, the permanent acceptance of the results of sound judgement becomes knowledge. (Anon. *In Tht.* II.23–32; cf. III.7–13, where he speaks of those who credit the senses with accuracy and are refuted in the *Theaetetus*)

It is significant that the anonymous commentator does not connect accuracy with external impressions and denies it to the senses too (III.7–13). Therefore it is possible that, as Tarrant suggested, the commentator introduced this appeal to the accuracy of a different instrument (in this case, the criterion as a whole) as a response to Potamo's accurate impression, whose value may depend on the senses and other factors external to the human mind.[25] The accuracy of the senses is also at issue in a brief doxographical report on the Academics, on the question whether the senses are 'true': οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀκαδημίας ὑγιεῖς μέν, ὅτι δι'αὐτῶν οἴονται λαβεῖν ἀληθινὰς φαντασίας, οὐ μὴν ἀκριβεῖς ('the Academics [say that the senses] are healthy, because they believe that they receive true impressions through them, yet [they are] not accurate', Aët. 4.9.2). This approach differs from Potamo's in that it connects accuracy (which is lacking in this case) with the instrument (δι'αὐτῶν) used to obtain impressions, rather than with the impressions themselves. It is significant, however, that accuracy is a desirable feature of the cognitive *instrument*, as it is also in Potamo and in the *Theaetetus* commentary (in the passage cited above).

Returning to impressions, we should note that there had been a fierce Hellenistic debate over what exactly guarantees the infallibility of an impression if it is to function as a criterion of truth. Thus the use of the superlative 'most accurate' in our evidence for Potamo can be interpreted as his response to the controversy, replacing the complete infallibility presupposed by the Stoic cataleptic impression with comparative accuracy. This is a stronger stipulation than

[25] Tarrant 1985: 132–3, 2000: 180.

that of subjective clarity or persuasiveness (τὸ πιθανόν), which was acceptable to Carneades as guidance for the conduct of life, and was subsequently developed into a criterion of truth in some Academic circles.[26] Potamo's introduction of accuracy implies a stronger claim of objectivity and he could be challenged on the question of how the accuracy of any impression is to be objectively ascertained. Some provision against this problem is perhaps provided by the superlative, which implies a choice (Potamo is an Eclectic after all!) of the most accurate one among impressions, but does not guarantee that this will be 100 per cent accurate. This is strongly reminiscent of the practice of those Academics who sought 'the truth or its best approximation', e.g. Cicero, *Tusc.* 4.7: *quid sit in quaque re maxime probabile, semper requiremus* ('we always seek what is most probable in each case').[27] As far as the accuracy requirement is concerned, therefore, some parallels are emerging between Potamo and developments within the Academic and Platonic tradition, such as the approach of the anonymous *Theaetetus* commentary, and the type of fallibilism reflected in Cicero's work.

These parallels sit side by side with the Stoic influences discussed above, where it was also pointed out that Potamo's formulation does not fully conform to what is known from the Stoa on the criterion of truth. Potamo introduces (for the first time so explicitly) a distinction between two aspects of the criterion, namely the cognitive faculty and a separate instrument. By selecting the 'ruling part of the soul' Potamo is able to unite a variety of human faculties (such as those proposed by Boethus and Posidonius at D.L. 7.54) under one category.[28] As for his instrument, it appears that the 'most accurate impression' is meant to function as a standard used and applied by the ruling part; the latter has no autonomous role on the orthodox Stoic account of the criterion, which consists in automatically self-certifying cognitive impressions.

[26] See Cic. *Luc.* 33; S.E. *M.* 7.173; Brittain 2001, esp. 94–128; Striker 1996b: 162–3, 1996a: 53–6.

[27] See also Cic. *Tusc.* 4.11: *quid esset simillimum veri quaereremus. quem morem cum Carneades acutissime copiosissimeque tenuisset*... Cf. Brittain 2001: 112 n. 59: 'The various alternative Ciceronian reports crediting Arcesilaos and Carneades with the quest for *probabilia* should be understood as the result of the Philonian/Metrodorian interpretation of Academic history.'

[28] The fact that he makes no mind/senses distinction might also mean that he adopted the view of a unitary and rational soul.

THE ROLE OF THE *THEAETETUS*

An important characteristic of Potamo's scheme is his use of prepositional phrases to describe the function of the two aspects of the criterion: ὑφ' οὗ γίνεται ἡ κρίσις ('that by whose agency the judgement is made'); δι' οὗ ('that through which' the judgement is made). This method of conveying distinctions and correlations in theoretical concepts was more widely used in physics, particularly under the influence of Aristotle's account of the four causes.[29] Potamo is the first philosopher known to have used this method to distinguish between agent and instrument in the case of the criterion of truth. Some form of precedent can however be found in Plato's bid to establish the centre of perception in the *Theaetetus*:

ἀπόκρισις ποτέρα ὀρθοτέρα, ᾧ ὁρῶμεν τοῦτο εἶναι ὀφθαλμούς, ἢ δι' οὗ ὁρῶμεν, καὶ ᾧ ἀκούομεν ὦτα, ἢ δι' οὗ ἀκούομεν;

Δι' ὧν ἕκαστα αἰσθανόμεθα, ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες, μᾶλλον ἢ οἷς.

'Which of the two answers is more correct, that eyes are that by which we see or that through which we see, and ears are that by which we hear, or that through which we hear?'

'Well, I should think, Socrates, that [eyes and ears are] the things through which we perceive in each case, rather than the things by which.' (Pl. *Tht.* 184c)

Plato's subject here is not the criterion of truth in the sense given to the term by Hellenistic philosophers, but rather (at this point of the dialogue) the questions whether knowledge is perception and which is the faculty that can attain truth.[30] Nevertheless, the distinction between agent and instrument within a theory on the acquisition of knowledge is present, and in this context Plato introduces the mind as a unitary perceiving consciousness over and above the individual senses (cf. 186b).[31] Burnyeat has drawn attention to

[29] Potamo's own report on the principles of physics follows this pattern (see below pp. 103–6). See also the doxographical reports on Alcmaeon (24 B4 DK) and Aristotle (*DG* p. 310, from Stobaeus).

[30] 186a: ποτέρων οὖν τίθης τὴν οὐσίαν; 'Being' and truth are found to be grasped only by the soul in thought (186b–d).

[31] Cf. Burnyeat 1990: 58: 'Plato's achievement in this passage is nothing less than the first unambiguous statement in the history of philosophy of the difficult but undoubtedly important idea of the unity of consciousness.'

the importance of Plato's linguistic usage in this passage, and has shown that in grammatical terms the dative conveys the idea of 'subjecthood or even agency', while the prepositional phrase with διά + genitive signifies the equipment used, perhaps with some spatial connotations.[32] Even Long, who emphasised the Stoic pedigree of Potamo's criterion, acknowledges that 'this Platonic passage [*sc.* *Tht.* 184c] was surely the origin of the two-fold criterion discussed above'.[33]

The anonymous commentator on the *Theaetetus* reports that there were indeed some Platonists who took the dialogue to be on the subject of the criterion (II.11–14), and it is not unlikely that Potamo too treated it as the authoritative source for Plato's views on epistemology. He thus felt entitled to adopt the agent/instrument distinction from this Platonic canonical text (replacing Plato's dative with a more straightforward expression of agency) and use it in combination with Stoic terminology to formulate his twofold criterion.[34]

OTHER CRITERIAL SCHEMES

The most important parallels for Potamo's subdivision of the criterion date from the second century AD onwards. The Platonist Alcinous (usually dated in the second century AD) proposes in the *Didaskalikos* the same distinction as Potamo, but differs especially in one of his identifications:

ἐπεὶ οὖν ἔστι τι τὸ κρῖνον, ἔστι δὲ καὶ τὸ κρινόμενον, εἴη ἄν τι καὶ τὸ ἐκ τούτων ἀποτελούμενον, ὅπερ εἴποι ἄν τις κρίσιν. κυρίως μὲν δὴ τὴν κρίσιν ὀνομάσαι ἄν τις κριτήριον, κοινότερον δὲ καὶ τὸ κρῖνον· τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ διττόν, τὸ μὲν ὑφ' οὗ κρίνεται τὸ κρινόμενον, τὸ δὲ δι' οὗ, ὧν τὸ μὲν εἴη ἂν ὁ ἐν ἡμῖν νοῦς, τὸ δὲ δι' οὗ ὄργανον φυσικὸν κριτικὸν προηγουμένως μὲν τῶν ἀληθῶν, ἑπομένως δὲ καὶ τῶν ψευδῶν· τοῦτο δὲ οὐκ ἄλλο τί ἐστιν ἢ λόγος φυσικός. σαφέστερον δ' ἐπιόντων κριτὴς

32 Burnyeat 1976: 37–8, 41 (cf. 33–4).
33 Long 1988: 192 n. 33.
34 Even Stoic epistemology was itself indebted to the *Theaetetus*, transforming the perceptual criterion attributed there to Protagoras into a non-relative concept of truth, and also making use of the imagery developed in the wax tablet and aviary models; cf. Long 2006. Ioppolo 1990, esp. 438–2 discussed Zeno's debt to the wax tablet model and the arguments establishing the infallibility of sensation, but argued that his avoidance of an αἴσθησις/λόγος opposition enabled him to posit a (preverbal) conceptualisation at the level of φαντασία.

μὲν ἂν λέγοιτο ὁ φιλόσοφος, ὑφ’ οὗ τὰ πράγματα κρίνεται, κριτὴς δὲ καὶ ὁ λόγος, δι’ οὗ τὸ ἀληθὲς κρίνεται, ὃ καὶ ὄργανον ἔφαμεν εἶναι.

Since there is a judging subject, and there is something that is judged, there must also be something that results from these, and that may be termed judgement. In the strictest sense, one might declare the act of judgement to be the criterion, but more broadly the judging subject [is the criterion] as well. This may be taken in two senses: (i) that *by the agency of which* what is judged is judged, and (ii) that *through which* it is judged. Of these the former would be the intellect in us, while ‘that by means of which’ is the physical instrument that judges – primarily truth, but consequently also falsehood; and this is none other than natural reason. To take a clearer view of the matter, the judge might be identified with the philosopher, by whose agency things are judged, but it could also be identified with the reason, through which the truth is judged, which was what we also declared to be the instrument of judgement. (Alcin. *Didask.* 4.1–2, transl. Dillon)

The language of the agent/instrument distinction is applied here in a Platonist context, possibly influenced by *R.* 9.582a–e, privileging the mind (which is later clarified as representing the philosopher,[35] that is the ideal human agent as a whole) and its own internal instrument, ‘reason’ (λόγος), over any external impressions. Eventually Alcinous does reserve a role for the sensible world through his subdivision of *logos* into ‘scientific’ (ἐπιστημονικός) and ‘opining’ (δοξαστικός) – the latter connected with *doxa* and in turn with the senses.[36] Note how Alcinous, even though he uses the agent/instrument scheme (ὑφ’ οὗ/δι’ οὗ), treats both aspects as active: they are subdivisions of the κρῖνον (l. 3), and they are both called κριτής (ll. 7–8).

A more complex version of the partition of the criterion can be found in a short treatise *On the Criterion and the Governing Part* by the second-century AD scientist Ptolemy. The distinction between agent and instrument persists, but there is not a complete agreement with Alcinous or Potamo in the use of prepositional phrases:

ὧν καὶ αὐτῶν μεσαίτατον μὲν γίνεται καὶ ἀρχὴ τὸ κρῖνον, περιοχὴ δὲ καὶ ὥσπερ ὄργανα τό τε δι’ οὗ κρίνεται τὸ κρινόμενον καὶ τὸ ᾧ κρίνει τὸ κρῖνον, λάβοιμεν ἂν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐνεργείας αὐτῆς ποιούμενοι τὴν

[35] As opposed to the φιλότιμος and the φιλοκερδής of *R.* 9.582a–e.

[36] *Didask.* 4.2–3. Sedley 1996 shows how Alcinous proceeds from this distinction to an ambitious parallelism between the epistemologies applicable to the sensible and intelligible worlds respectively.

ἐπὶ τὰ καθόλου ἔφοδον· ἐπεὶ γὰρ τάς τε ἐπιστάσεις καὶ τὰς ἀνακρίσεις καὶ τὰς γνώσεις ποιούμεθα τῶν ὄντων αἰσθηθέντες καὶ διανοηθέντες καὶ διαλεχθέντες ἤτοι πρὸς αὑτοὺς ἢ πρὸς ἄλλους, οὐκ ἀλόγως ἄν τις ἐφαρμόσειεν τὴν μὲν αἴσθησιν τῷ δι' οὗ κρίνεται τὸ κρινόμενον τὸν δὲ νοῦν τῷ κρίνοντι· τὸν δὲ λόγον ᾧ κρίνει τὸ κρῖνον.

Of these the judging subject is the most central and the first principle, while the instrument through which the object under judgement is judged and that by which the agent judges surround it and act as it were as its instruments. We may grasp them from the activity itself as we follow the procedure for investigating universals. Since we observe, examine and come to understand reality by sense perception, by reasoning and by discourse either in our own minds or with other people, it would not be unreasonable to match sense perception with the instrument through which the object under judgement is judged, intellect with the judging subject, and reason with that by which the agent judges. (Ptol. *Judic.* p. 5 Lammert)

Ptolemy adds the further subdivision of 'that by which' (ᾧ) the judging agent (τὸ κρῖνον) performs its judgement (the former is identified with λόγος and the latter with νοῦς). 'That through which' the object is subjected to judgement is now identified with the senses, and so the two rivals from the empiricist vs rationalist debate are given distinct roles, whereby λόγος represents the method and mode in which the mind operates, while the senses function as instruments. This scheme reveals Ptolemy's simultaneous concern with the workings of intellectual activity in the daily life of a scientist (ἀπὸ τῆς ἐνεργείας αὐτῆς, 'from the activity itself') and the relative contributions of sensation and intellect, as well as with the identification of a universal standard for the acquisition of direct knowledge.[37]

A closer look at Alcinous' and Ptolemy's schemes reveals that, by contrast with Potamo, they both approach the criterion in terms of cognitive faculties only (reason and senses), and they do not introduce the Stoic or the Epicurean notions of the 'means of establishing what is the case' or the 'yardstick'. On the other hand, they too identify a 'dominant' factor where these faculties are located and controlled, namely intellect (νοῦς), corresponding to Potamo's 'ruling part' (ἡγεμονικόν), which includes and subsumes all cognitive faculties.

[37] Long 1988: 179, 192.

The threefold division is also present in Sextus Empiricus, in what seems to be its most systematic version, including some new and more complex modifications:

ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ λογικὸν κριτήριον λέγοιτ' ἂν τριχῶς, τὸ ὑφ' οὗ καὶ τὸ δι' οὗ καὶ τὸ καθ' ὅ, οἷον ὑφ' οὗ μὲν ἄνθρωπος, δι' οὗ δὲ ἤτοι αἴσθησις ἢ διάνοια, καθ' ὃ δὲ ἡ προσβολὴ τῆς φαντασίας, καθ' ἣν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐπιβάλλει κρίνειν διά τινος τῶν προειρημένων.

But the logical criterion can be spoken of in three senses – that by the agency of which, that through which, and that according to which. In other words, that by the agency of which – a human; through which – either perception or thought; according to which – the impact of the impression, following which humans set themselves to make judgements through one of the means we have mentioned. (S.E. *PH* 2.16)

πάρεστι μέντοι καὶ τὸ λογικὸν τοῦτο ὑποδιαιρεῖσθαι, λέγοντας τὸ μέν τι εἶναι κριτήριον ὡς ὑφ' οὗ, τὸ δὲ ὡς δι' οὗ, τὸ δὲ ὡς προσβολὴ καὶ σχέσις. ὑφ' οὗ μὲν ὡς ἄνθρωπος, δι' οὗ δὲ ὡς αἴσθησις, τὸ δὲ τρίτον ὡς ἡ προσβολὴ τῆς φαντασίας.

It is however possible to subdivide this logical [*sc.* criterion] too, saying that one is a criterion in the sense of 'by the agency of which', one in the sense of 'through which', and one in the sense of 'impact and relation': 'By which' – namely a human being; 'through which' – namely sense perception; the third one – namely, the impact of the impression. (S.E. *M.* 7.35)

Even though the use of prepositions is reminiscent of the other philosophers' formulations, Sextus offers different candidates for the subdivisions of the criterion: 'that by the agency of which' (ὑφ' οὗ) is not the intellect any more but the human being; thought (διάνοια) replaces reason (λόγος) as the non-perceptual faculty and is introduced as one of two alternatives for 'that through which' (δι' οὗ) alongside sense perception, but featuring only in the *PH* version.

Finally, a new concept is added, namely the 'impact of the impression', described as 'that in virtue of/according to which' (καθ' ὅ) judgement is made. This appears to refer to the process of mobilising and activating the other aspects of the criterion, which are always present but need an external stimulus if any judgement is to take place. This is at any rate how Sextus himself interprets matters in his analogy of weighing and testing straightness and crookedness,

with references to the *need* for all three aspects, where the 'impact' (προσβολή) corresponds to the application of the scales or straightedge to the object being weighed or measured (*M.* 7.36).[38] In this scheme, therefore, one of the aspects of the criterion is a procedure or action, which is reminiscent of Alcinous' remark that 'in the strictest sense one might declare the act of judgement to be the criterion'.

ὃν γὰρ τρόπον ἐν τῇ τῶν βαρέων καὶ κούφων ἐξετάσει τρία ἐστὶ κριτήρια, ὅ τε ζυγοστάτης καὶ ὁ ζυγὸς καὶ ἡ τοῦ ζυγοῦ θέσις, τούτων δὲ ὁ μὲν ζυγοστάτης κριτήριον ἦν τὸ ὑφ' οὗ, ὁ δὲ ζυγὸς τὸ δι' οὗ, ἡ δὲ θέσις τοῦ ζυγοῦ ὡς σχέσις, καὶ πάλιν ὃν τρόπον πρὸς τὴν τῶν εὐθειῶν καὶ στρεβλῶν διάκρισιν τεχνίτου τε καὶ κανόνος καὶ τῆς τούτου προσβολῆς ἔστι χρεία, κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἀληθῶν τε καὶ ψευδῶν διάγνωσιν δεόμεθα τῶν προειρημένων ἡμῖν τριῶν κριτηρίων, καὶ ἔοικε τῷ μὲν ζυγοστάτῃ ἢ τέκτονι ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὑφ' οὗ γίνεται ἡ κρίσις, τῷ δὲ ζυγῷ καὶ κανόνι ἡ αἴσθησις καὶ ἡ διάνοια, δι' ἧς γίνεται τὰ τῆς κρίσεως, τῇ δὲ σχέσει τῶν προειρημένων ὀργάνων ἡ προσβολὴ τῆς φαντασίας, καθ' ἣν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐπιβάλλεται κρίνειν.

For just like in the testing of heavy and light objects there are three criteria, the weigher, the pair of scales, and the position of the scales, and of these the weigher is the criterion 'by the agency of which', the scales are the criterion 'through which', and the application of the scales is the criterion as 'relation'; or again, in the same way that in determining straight and crooked [lines] there is a need for the craftsman and the straightedge and the application of this, similarly in philosophy for the detection of true and false we need the three criteria mentioned above. And the human being, by whose agency judgement takes place, resembles the weigher or craftsman; perception and thought, through which the process of judgement occurs, resemble the scales and straightedge; and the impact of the impression, according to which the human being undertakes to judge, resembles the relative state of the aforementioned tools. (S.E. *M.* 7.36–7)

We must note that Sextus offers no further clarification of this concept of 'impact' or 'relation' or 'state' (σχέσις) beyond treating it simply as a metaphor based on the scales/straightedge analogy, and makes

[38] Cf. Brunschwig 1988: 161. Alternatively, one could pursue a comparison with Ptolemy's third component of the criterion, 'that by which' (ᾧ), and explain the 'impact of the impression' as the manner in which the agent performs his/her judgement; thus Long 1988: 189–90, where he argues for an even closer equivalence between Sextus' φαντασία and Ptolemy's λόγος.

no more references to it. His entire discussion of the third aspect of the criterion assumes that this is simply identified as the 'impression' (φαντασία, *M.* 7.370–438), and then proceeds to cast doubt on the relevant dogmatist accounts.

'Impact' appears as equivalent to the impression itself in another passage from Sextus, where he presents the three aspects of the criterion as competing versions proposed by rival dogmatists:

οἱ μὲν ἐν τῷ λόγῳ οἱ δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἀλόγοις αἰσθήσεσιν οἱ δὲ ἐν ἀμφοτέροις τοῦτο ἀπέλιπον, καὶ οἱ μὲν τὸ ὑφ' οὗ ὡς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, οἱ δὲ τὸ δι' οὗ ὡς τὴν αἴσθησιν καὶ διάνοιαν, οἱ δὲ τὸ ὡς προσβολὴν καθάπερ τὴν φαντασίαν.

Some allowed it [*sc.* the criterion] to be located in reason, some in the non-rational senses, and some in both; and some admitted the criterion 'by the agency of which' as the human being, some the one 'through which' as sense perception and thought, and some the one in the manner of 'impact', that is the impression. (S.E. *M.* 7.261)

This passage (from καὶ οἱ μέν) has been suspected as an interpolated gloss because of its syntactical awkwardness and its inconsistency with the other passages quoted above, where Sextus clearly presents the three aspects of the criterion as complementary and not rival candidates proposed by different schools.[39] It is possible, however, that Sextus deliberately chose to emphasise here the disagreement among earlier philosophers, following on from his point in the first sentence of the passage.[40] There is in fact parallel evidence for this presentation of the aspects of the criterion within the Pyrrhonist tradition: πρὸς τῷ καὶ διαφωνεῖσθαι τὸ κριτήριον, τῶν μὲν τὸν ἄνθρωπον κριτήριον εἶναι λεγόντων, τῶν δὲ τὰς αἰσθήσεις, ἄλλων τὸν λόγον, ἐνίων τὴν καταληπτικὴν φαντασίαν ('moreover, there is disagreement about the criterion, since some say that man is the criterion, others the senses, others reason and some the cataleptic impression', D.L. 9.95).

In an overall assessment of Sextus' criterial schemes, it is evident that an important factor in his own interpretation (or that of his

[39] Bett 2005: 53 n. 102.

[40] Striker 1996a: 69–70; Brunschwig 1988: 162: 'Sextus's strategy toward conceptual disagreements lacks continuity; here, as elsewhere, he might have allowed himself to introduce a *diaphonia* in a context where it was quite out of place.'

immediate source) is the imagery of a human being who performs the action of weighing or measuring, using a particular instrument. This was a widespread metaphor in the doxography on the criterion found, for example, in the report on the Peripatetics at *M.* 7.226, where perception is said to play the role of tool, and thought that of artisan. The reason for this prevalence must be related to Epicurus' use of the straightedge (κανών) analogy in one of the earliest fully fledged theories on the criterion.[41] The analogy was maintained in later formulations and enriched with references to other instruments such as the scales, as we have seen in Sextus. On the other hand, there appears to be an inconsistency between the scales/straightedge analogy and those passages where Sextus himself treats 'impact' (προσβολή) as equivalent to or consisting in an impression (i.e. *M.* 7.261 and the section on φαντασία in the subsequent discussion, *M.* 7.370–498):[42] if the impact *is* the impression, one cannot interpret it as an application of the impression onto an independent instrument. In what follows I will explore an alternative interpretation of Sextus' scheme, which does not depend on the weigher/carpenter imagery, and has potential implications for Potamo's role in the history of the criterion and its conceptual analysis.

POTAMO'S SCHEME IN THE LIGHT OF LATER SUBDIVISIONS

We can now assess what light may be thrown on Potamo's views by the later subdivisions of the criterion discussed above. Given the lack of similar information for earlier philosophers, it is likely that Potamo was the first to introduce the distinction between agent and instrument in these terms: the sources he could draw on included much doxographical material, possibly compiled in the early first century BC by Posidonius and Antiochus. From the 'offspring' of these doxographies that we now read in Sextus it appears that doxographers up to that time, in detecting philosophers' positions on the criterion of truth, included criterial faculties (mind, thought, reason, senses)

[41] Striker 1996a: 31–3.

[42] Cf. *M.* 7.370: ἀλλ' ἵνα καὶ διὰ τούτων τι γνωσθῇ, δεῖ τὸ τρίτον ὁμολογῆσαι κριτήριον, τουτέστι φαντασίαν· οὔτε γὰρ ἡ αἴσθησις οὔτε ὁ νοῦς δίχα τοῦ φανταστικῶς ἑτεροιοῦσθαι δύναταί τισιν ἐπιβάλλειν, where impression is treated as an impact on the senses and the mind.

under the same heading as criterial applications/standards/ instruments (impressions, preconceptions, passions). As suggested above, Potamo's inspiration for proposing the conceptual distinction could have come from the recognition of separate roles for the agent and the instrument of perception, first introduced in the *Theaetetus*.

Moreover, in the passages from Sextus that have already been discussed, it is possible to detect indications that this dialogue had a broader influence on ancient thinking about the criterion of truth. First of all, it contained a long discussion of Protagoras' *homo mensura* thesis, from which it was not difficult to extrapolate a view of the human being as the criterion (the words 'judge' and 'criterion' appear in connection with Protagoras at 160c and 178b–c).[43] Sextus shows how the Protagorean position can yield a positive view on the criterion of truth, even when it is presented as a rejection (*M.* 7.60–4; *PH* 1.216).

There is a further passage in the *Theaetetus*, which can be compared with Sextus' 'interactive' third aspect of the criterion, whereby judgement also depends on the momentary impact and relative state (προσβολὴ καὶ σχέσις) created between impression and cognitive faculties. While Sextus elucidates it, as we have seen, through his comparison with the application of the scales and the straightedge (*M.* 7.36–7), there is another parallel for the idea, already present in Plato's relativist description of perception as it takes place in a world of flux:[44] καὶ ἡμῖν οὕτω μέλαν τε καὶ λευκὸν καὶ ὁτιοῦν ἄλλο χρῶμα ἐκ τῆς <u>προσβολῆς</u> τῶν ὀμμάτων πρὸς τὴν προσήκουσαν φορὰν φανεῖται γεγενημένον ('so we will find that black and white and any other colour has come to be from the <u>impact</u> of the eyes in relation to the appropriate motion', or 'the <u>collision</u> of the eyes with the appropriate motion', *Tht.* 153e). There is therefore reason to think that Plato's dialogue lies in the background of several different attempts to clarify our access to truth by specifying different

[43] Cf. Striker 1996a: 26 and 69: 'What is new in Sextus is that he names the person as a κριτήριον. The only example of this use of the word [*sc.* ἄνθρωπος] which he can supply from the history of philosophy is Protagoras.' A variant of the man-as-measure thesis is also encountered in Pseudo-Archytas, *On the Ten Categories* 31.30–32.2: ἄνθρωπος κανών ἐστι καὶ στάθμη τῆς ὄντως ἐπιστήμης καὶ γέγονε πρὸς τὸ κατιδεῖν τὴν τῶν ὄντων ἅπασαν ἀλήθειαν.

[44] My attention was drawn to this passage by David Sedley.

contributing aspects. We have seen that there were thinkers in Antiquity who were prepared to read it as a treatment of the criterion of truth (Anon. *In Tht.* II.11–14). Could it be that the elements of Sextus' tripartition (man, instrument and impact) also go back to this dialogue?

On one view, the source of the tripartition could be an early first-century BC author, along the lines of Sedley's proposal of Aenesidemus as the source for the doxographies in *M.* 7, transmitting material from Antiochus and Posidonius.[45] Even though we cannot be certain about these personal identifications, Sedley has shown that Sextus' doxographies reflect the 'state of play' in the early first century BC. If the subdivision of the criterion comes from the same period then we have an important precedent, which would mean that Potamo was not the first to introduce the conceptual distinction. But there are reasons to think that the source of the subdivisions is not the same as that of the doxographies: firstly, the tripartition does not play any role in and is arguably incompatible with the structure of the doxographical material; secondly, we have seen that there was an alternative Pyrrhonist strategy that treated man, perception, reason and impression as rival candidates for the criterion within a framework of *diaphonia* rather than as conceptual refinements.[46]

Thus for philosophers around Potamo's time (and perhaps slightly later) the question of the source for the articulation of the criterion based on different readings of the *Theaetetus* remains. We have seen that Potamo employed the agent/instrument distinction from a section criticising the link between sense impressions and access to truth (184b–186e), while Sextus' subdivision echoes a relativist account of sense perception (153d–154b). The two approaches are considered compatible by Tarrant, who is in favour of treating the *Theaetetus* as the primary source for Potamo's epistemology. According to Tarrant, Potamo probably supported the view that Plato was serious about the Secret Doctrine, a view which could be enhanced by an appeal

45 See Sedley 1992: 24–5.

46 Perhaps what we have at *M.* 7.261 is Sextus' rather awkward combination of the two approaches, *diaphonia* and conceptual fine-tuning.

to Protagoras, whose relativism and rejection of a single authoritative viewpoint is compatible and comparable with Potamo's eclecticism.[47]

We must note, however, that Potamo differentiates his position from relativism. His reference to the ruling part of the soul owes more to the tradition of treating various cognitive faculties as criteria than to a modification of the 'man-measure' thesis.[48] Moreover, Potamo's scheme does not include the relativised aspect of the criterion, namely the 'impact and relation'. This still leaves open the question of the source for Sextus' tripartition of the criterion in 'Protagorean'/*Theaetetus* terms: as we have seen, Sextus himself is not attuned to its implications and interprets the model on the basis of the scales/straightedge analogy, which means that it probably originated outside the Pyrrhonist tradition. It cannot be excluded that the tripartition with its relativist connotations was present in Potamo's work; his full discussion of the criterion of truth may have included the sense of 'impact' as one of the various criteria that could be detected in the *Theaetetus*, without making it part of his final position on the matter.

DISTINCTIONS AND REFINEMENTS

Returning now to the way in which the different contributory aspects of the criterion of truth were articulated by Potamo, it does not appear from the concise phrase reported by Diogenes Laertius that he pressed the distinction very far in terms of commitment to particular candidates for 'that by whose agency' and 'that through which' respectively. The 'ruling part of the soul' is a very broad concept, encompassing the faculties of both sensation and intellection; and the 'most accurate impression' seems to be introduced by Potamo only as an example (οἷον) of what can function as the instrument of judgement. The adverbial οἷον can also be explanatory, meaning 'that is to say', as it

[47] Tarrant 2000: 177–80.

[48] Thus I do not find myself in agreement with Tarrant 2000: 179: 'the notion that one [*sc.* criterion] is the ruling part in a human being is based on a modification of the notion of "man the measure" in the light of Plato's idea that the soul is the ultimate organ of judgement (*Tht.* 184–6)'.

seems to do in the *PH* 2.16 passage cited above, but this is a very uncommon usage.[49]

Potamo's method of conceptual distinction/clarification is further reflected in the use of ὡς, 'in the sense of', introducing each of the two aspects of the criterion. If Diogenes has preserved the original wording here, it would seem that Potamo proposed the two as different ways in which the term 'criterion of truth', treated as a 'word with many meanings' (πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον), can be applied; that is, both the ruling part of the soul and the most accurate impression are criteria (cf. the plural in the Greek), but in different senses. This is paralleled most closely in the Sextus passage from *PH* 2.16: 'the logical criterion can be spoken of in three ways'.

On the other hand, Sextus' formulation at *M.* 7.35, where there is explicit reference to subdivision (πάρεστι μέντοι καὶ τὸ λογικὸν τοῦτο ὑποδιαιρεῖσθαι) is problematic, because his wording in what follows is difficult to pin down with certainty; the use of ὡς, in particular, seems to vary between the two sentences of the passage. It appears that there is first a subdivision of senses as in Potamo's case (one is a criterion in the sense of 'by the agency of which', one in the sense of 'through which', and one in the sense of 'impact and relation'). This is followed by specifications/explanations for each of these senses (ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ὡς αἴσθησις, ὡς ἡ προσβολὴ τῆς φαντασίας), with ὡς now meaning 'namely' (rather than 'for example' because Sextus does not consider any other candidates in the long discussion of each aspect that follows from *M.* 7.262 onwards).[50] Eventually Sextus goes on to speak of three criteria, all equally necessary for distinguishing true from false (*M.* 7.36–7). Thus, in terms of formulation and wording, it would appear that Potamo's account of the criterion of truth has most in common with the version found in Sextus, *PH* 2.16 and *M.* 7.34–5; they both seem to draw inspiration ultimately from the *Theaetetus*, albeit from different sections.

On the whole, both Sextus and Potamo present a scheme with a distinction between faculties and instruments that can serve to analyse most instances of direct judgement between truth and falsehood.

49 LSJ s.v. οἷος v.2 (e).

50 Bett and Brunschwig differ in their translation of this ὡς at *M.* 7.261 ('namely' and 'e.g.' respectively).

They adopt it, however, for different reasons. Sextus uses it to structure and organise his polemic, which attacks the different aspects in turn,[51] while for Potamo it is indicative of his eclectic project: he has selected concepts from Stoicism (ἡγεμονικόν, φαντασία) and from a certain interpretation of Plato (the distinction between agent and instrument of judgement), even – possibly – from Academic probabilism (the *most* accurate impression), and has organised these elements within a conceptual distinction between different senses of the term 'criterion'.

Potamo's resulting articulation through prepositional phrases has the additional function of clarifying and simplifying matters for the audience/reader, because it draws a straightforward parallelism with any everyday situation where an agent uses an instrument. This need not refer exclusively to weighing or assessing the straightness of lines, it could be for example a hunter using traps, nets and hounds (cf. Aristocles *ap*. Eus. *PE* 19.21.7). Thus the instrument in question need not necessarily possess the special properties of the scales or the straightedge, and we must not forget that Potamo did not acknowledge the application of the instrument as a separate factor in the process of judgement.

II PHYSICS

ἀρχάς τε τῶν ὅλων τήν τε ὕλην καὶ τὸ ποιοῦν, ποιότητά τε καὶ τόπον· ἐξ οὗ γὰρ καὶ ὑφ' οὗ καὶ ποίῳ καὶ ἐν ᾧ.

ποίῳ : ποίω<ς> Reiske, Roeper[4], Marcovich : fort. ποιῷ (ποιῶι P[1] ut vid.)

And [he says] that the fundamental principles of all things are matter and that which makes, as well as quality and place; in other words 'that from which', and 'that by the agency of which', and 'by what kind/'by a certain kind', and 'that in which'. (D.L. 1.21)

DOXOGRAPHERS ON THE PRINCIPLES

Diogenes' brief report on Potamo's physics addresses only the issue of the primary principles (*archai*). This was probably thought to be

[51] Cf. Striker 1996a: 69.

sufficient by Diogenes or his source, because establishing where a philosopher stood on the principles was as important for physics as was the criterion of truth for epistemology. First principles are identified by Cicero as the main point of controversy in physics at *Luc.* 117: *tantum de principiis rerum e quibus omnia constant videamus quem probet, est enim inter magnos homines summa dissensio* ('let us just see whom the [wise-man-to-be] will approve with respect to the first principles from which everything is constituted, since this is the main subject of disagreement among leading men').[52]

Doxographical accounts on physics treating the question of *archai* as their starting point were in circulation at least by the time of Aristotle, whose systematised accounts of Presocratic principles are the earliest surviving specimens.[53] Such material must have been in circulation during Potamo's time, for example in the form of the precursor(s) to Aëtius' *Placita* 1.3 (usually dated in the first century AD), which was first reconstructed by Diels in his *Doxographi Graeci*[54] from Pseudo-Plutarch's *Physical Tenets* and Stobaeus' *Anthologium*. Substantial new ground towards an understanding of the background and achievements of this author has been made in the three volumes of *Aëtiana* by Mansfeld and Runia.[55] Mansfeld and Runia even suggested tentatively that Aëtius' activity might be connected with Alexandria, which would mean that the material he used was available there.[56] In Sextus Empiricus the attack on natural philosophers, after a brief methodological comment, opens with a quick-fire doxography inspired by his opponents' classification of principles (*M.* 9.4–11). The doxography on the bodily principle (*PH* 3.30–2; *M.* 9.360–64) is repeated in almost identical form in Pseudo-Galen's *Philosophical History* (18, *DG* pp. 610–11), which suggests a common background independent both of Aëtius, since it does not appear in this form in Stobaeus or Pseudo-Plutarch, and of Theophrastus, since there are

52 Cicero follows this up with a doxography on the material constituents of the world.

53 See Mansfeld 1986, esp. 6 for evidence on pre-Aristotelian antecedents of collections of quotations etc.

54 Berlin 1879.

55 Mansfeld and Runia 1997, 2009 and 2010. The final volume is a collection of previously published papers on doxography by the two authors.

56 Mansfeld and Runia 1997: 322 with n. 15. One of Aëtius' sources, Theophrastus' *Physical Tenets*, appears in the list of his works in Diogenes Laertius (5.48), which is thought to be the work of the Alexandrian scholar Hermippus (see above p. 34).

references to Diodorus Cronus (fourth–third century BC) and Asclepiades of Bithynia (second century BC). Thus the report on Potamo's physics can be considered in the context of this flourishing and varied tradition of identifying and juxtaposing philosophical positions on the principles.

THE WORDING OF DIOGENES' REPORT

Some initial questions, which will have an impact on our assessment of the status of Potamo's individual principles, arise from the wording of Diogenes' report, which is divided into a list of principles and their corresponding prepositional phrases. The first list presents us with two pairs of principles, interlinked through a somewhat puzzling combination of particles. One interpretation would be to take τε . . . τε (in τήν τε ὕλην . . . ποιότητά τε) as forming the link between the two pairs, while καί . . . καί connect each of the pairs internally. More radically, we could omit the comma after ποιοῦν and construe ποιότητά τε καὶ τόπον as the object of ποιοῦν: 'that which produces quality and place'. This would result in a derivative status for quality and place, and would offer some advantages for the process of accounting for them, given that there are parallel accounts where quality and place come about with the interaction of passive and active principles (such as the one going back to Antiochus of Ascalon at Cic. *Ac.* 1.24, discussed below).

However, the list of prepositional phrases that follows as an exemplification and justification of the initial list[57] presents all the principles as co-ordinate. For this reason, and because the introduction of the doxographical report ('[he believes] that the principles of all things are . . .') hints at a list of irreducible first principles, I have pursued an interpretation that takes quality and place as commensurate with and on the same level as matter and the active principle. It cannot be entirely excluded, however, that Potamo operated with a 'two-tier' system of principles, similar to the one that seems to emerge

[57] Contrast Potamo's formulation for the criterion of truth, where the prepositional scheme serves to introduce the conceptual distinction, which is then 'filled in' with the relevant items.

from the complex account of 'Old Academic' physics in Cicero, *Ac.* 1.24–9.

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE PRINCIPLES

Potamo's pair of matter and active/shaping force is straightforwardly paralleled by the Stoic pair of passive and active principles, identified as (a) 'unqualified substance', 'matter' or 'substrate' and (b) 'reason' or 'god' or 'cause':

δοκεῖ δ' αὐτοῖς ἀρχὰς εἶναι τῶν ὅλων δύο, τὸ ποιοῦν καὶ τὸ πάσχον. τὸ μὲν οὖν πάσχον εἶναι τὴν ἄποιον οὐσίαν τὴν ὕλην, τὸ δὲ ποιοῦν τὸν ἐν αὐτῇ λόγον τὸν θεόν.

They think that there are two principles of the universe, that which acts and that which is acted upon. That which is acted upon is unqualified substance, i.e. matter; that which acts is the reason in it, i.e. god. (D.L. 7.134, transl. Long and Sedley)

Potamo identified the passive element ('that which is acted upon') as matter, but from the short report in Diogenes it is not clear whether he interpreted the active force in theological terms, or whether he intended to leave it open to less providentialist accounts – the non-theological interpretation remains a possibility and would mark a departure from the Stoic view. Note also that, like the Stoics, Potamo refers to 'principles of all things/the wholes' (ἀρχὰς τῶν ὅλων) and not 'of the all' (τοῦ παντός). As White clarifies, 'the plural "wholes" embraces both the cosmos and every individual body in it'.[58] The 'wholes' constitute a finite unified world for the Stoics, permeated by *pneuma*, while the 'all' includes the infinite void surrounding the world, and thus does not constitute a unified and cohesive entity (cf. Aët. 2.1.7[59] = *SVF* II 552; S.E. *M.* 9.332 = *SVF* II 524). By contrast, the requirement for a void-less whole or wholes in order to achieve cohesion did not arise for Epicurus, who believed that void exists both within and outside the world, and identified it as one of the fundamental constitutive parts of the universe.

58 White 2007: 42 with n. 19; cf. also 45: 'the active principle, which imbues every individual – all the "wholes", the cosmos and its component bodies alike'. See also Sedley 1999: 402.

59 See the reconstruction and interpretation of Mansfeld and Runia 2009: 319–20.

He thus spoke of 'the all': ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τὸ πᾶν ἐστι <σώματα καὶ κενόν> ('moreover, the all/everything is bodies and void', *Ep. Hdt.* 39).[60]

The two Stoic principles are also described by Calcidius in his discussion of *Tim.* 47e–48e (Calcidius 293), and the language used is reminiscent of Diogenes' report on Potamo: *proptereaque de existentibus genituram fieri et in existens desinere quod finiatur immortalibus perseverantibus, a quo fit et item ex quo fit quod gignitur* ('and therefore its birth arises out of existing things and passes away into what exists, because it is bounded by things which abide as immortals, i.e. *that by the agency of which* and *that from which* the generated thing comes into being'). In fact the practice of referring to fundamental physical concepts through the use of prepositional phrases goes all the way back to Aristotle's account of his material and efficient causes; cf. *Metaph.* 4.5.1010a20–1; 7.7.1032a17–18; *GA* 2.1.733b31–2.[61] It prevailed in the doxographical tradition, and passed through various stages of scholastic sophistication as it was used to systematise various philosophers' views. Prepositional phrases are used, for instance, in a scheme of Plato's principles reported by Aëtius (1.3.21, from Stobaeus, see below p. 115), as well as in the increasingly elaborate Middle-Platonic and Neoplatonic schemes.[62]

Returning to Potamo's first two principles, we should note that the dualist account that applies to the world's creation and constitution was not limited to Stoic theory.[63] Simplicius testifies that Theophrastus explicitly attributed a similar two-principle scheme to Plato, with reference to the *Timaeus*:

ὁ μέντοι Θεόφραστος τοὺς ἄλλους προϊστορήσας 'τούτοις', φησίν, 'ἐπιγενόμενος Πλάτων, τῇ μὲν δόξῃ καὶ τῇ δυνάμει πρότερος τοῖς δὲ χρόνοις ὕστερος, καὶ τὴν πλείστην πραγματείαν περὶ τῆς πρώτης φιλοσοφίας ποιησάμενος, ἐπέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν καὶ τοῖς φαινομένοις ἁψάμενος τῆς περὶ φύσεως ἱστορίας· ἐν ᾗ δύο τὰς ἀρχὰς βούλεται ποιεῖν, τὸ μὲν

[60] The supplement <σώματα καὶ τόπος> is argued for by Sedley 1982: 183–9.

[61] ἐξ οὗ is also used in the account of the four causes at *Ph.* 2.3, but not ὑφ' οὗ. Cf. Mansfeld 2001: 36.

[62] These are collected in Dörrie and Baltes 1996: 110–46.

[63] Stoic influence, however, must have been decisive in cases such as the brief doxography at S.E. *M.* 9.4–11, where *Od.* 4 is wildly allegorised to yield the two principles out of Proteus and Eidothea.

ὑποκείμενον ὡς ὕλην ὃ προσαγορεύει πανδεχές,[64] τὸ δὲ ὡς αἴτιον καὶ κινοῦν ὃ περιάπτει τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ δυνάμει.'

But Theophrastus, having first given a historical account of the others, adds: 'These were followed by Plato, who preceded them in reputation and ability, although chronologically he was later. He devoted the greater part of his work to first philosophy, but also paid attention to appearances, trying his hand at physical inquiry. In this inquiry he wants to make the principles two in number: one which underlies, in the role of matter, which he calls 'all-receiving', the other in the role of cause and mover, which he connects with the power of god and with that of the good. (Simp. *In Ph.* 26.7–13 = Fr. 230 Fortenbaugh *et al.*, transl. Sedley)

Such an interpretation was still current in the first century BC, and is reported by Cicero in connection with the Academic tradition. It is present in the context of the sceptical exposition at *Luc.* 118 (*Plato ex materia in se omnia recipiente mundum factum esse censet a deo sempiternum*, 'Plato reckons that the world was made everlasting by god from matter, which receives everything in itself'). A more complex version is also found in Varro's Antiochean account at *Ac.* 1.24, which purports to represent the fundamentally coinciding Platonic views of the only artificially distinct Academic and Peripatetic schools:

de natura autem (id enim sequebatur) ita dicebant ut eam dividerent in res duas, ut altera esset efficiens, altera autem quasi huic se praebens, eaque efficeretur aliquid. in eo quod efficeret vim esse censebant, in eo autem quod efficeretur tantum modo materiam quandam; in utroque tamen utrumque.

Their treatment of nature – the second part of philosophy – led them to divide it into two things, with one active and the other lending itself to it and thus acted on in some manner. Force was in the active nature, they thought, and just a kind of matter in the nature it acted upon, but both were present in each. (Cic. *Ac.* 1.24, transl. Brittain)

Such an interpretation of the Platonic first principles (though the text does not go as far as calling them 'principles', using the vague *res* instead)[65] is remarkable in that it does not allow a place for the

[64] This is a clear reference to the Receptacle of *Tim.* 48e–52c, called πανδεχές at 51a7. It is identified here tentatively with matter, following Aristotle, *Ph.* 4.2.209b11–17.
[65] See Inwood (forthcoming).

Forms as *archai*; but its presence in Theophrastus does not allow us to attribute it simply to Stoic influence.[66]

Furthermore, there is evidence for a dualist account of the principles within the Peripatetic school (which would be compatible with Varro's/Antiochus' claim that what he is reporting applies to the Peripatos just as much as to the 'genuine' early Academy). Epiphanius (*Adversus haereses* 3.31 = Critolaus Fr. 15 Wehrli) preserves what appears to be a Pythagorean interpretation of Aristotle's natural philosophy, and remarks that Critolaus was of the same opinion. There are reasons to believe that Critolaus is likely to have held the views that Epiphanius falsely summarises as Aristotelian, including ἔλεγε δὲ δύο ἀρχὰς εἶναι, θεὸν καὶ ὕλην ('he [*sc*. Aristotle] said that there are two principles, god and matter').[67]

In terms of Potamo's eclectic project, the active principle and matter might have constituted an inclusive account of 'the universe/the wholes' (τῶν ὅλων), simultaneously drawing on the Stoic tradition and certain variants of the Academic/Peripatetic one. But Potamo apparently did not consider this dualist account an exhaustive explanation, and proceeded to add two further principles, quality and place, which did not have such a clear prehistory in mainstream Hellenistic philosophy.

THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY IN ANCIENT PHYSICAL SYSTEMS

It is not possible, for example, to fit quality into the Stoic scheme of highest-level cosmic principles. Stoic ontology includes a theory of quality, both in the sense of belonging to a class of things described by a common noun or adjective (κοινῶς ποιός), and in the sense of a unique and enduring 'fingerprint' that makes the individual distinct (ἰδίως ποιός).[68] But qualities on this account are not part of the debate on primary physical principles for the Stoics. In physical terms, Stoic qualities are identified with portions of a thing's sustaining

66 Cf. Sharples 1995a: 70–3; Sedley 2002: 43. There is a further instance of this reading of Plato's principles at D.L. 3.69: δύο δὲ τῶν πάντων ἀπέφηνεν ἀρχάς, θεὸν καὶ ὕλην [ὕλην καὶ θεὸν?], ὃν καὶ νοῦν προσαγορεύει καὶ αἴτιον.

67 See Wehrli's commentary on Fr. 15, pointing to Critolaus' known departures from Peripatetic 'orthodoxy' (Cic. *Fin*. 5.14).

68 Cf. Sedley 1999: 403.

pneuma disposed in a certain way, the *pneuma* itself being made up of fire and air, two of the traditional elements that are only subsequent to matter and god.[69]

The notion of qualities as fundamental material principles, comparable to Anaximenes' air or Empedocles' four elements, has some Peripatetic pedigree within the doxographical tradition. Sextus ascribed the idea to Strato of Lampsacus, at the end of a brief doxographical passage covering from the material monists to Diodorus Cronus and Asclepiades of Bithynia, where we read that 'Strato, who is called the naturalist, [said that] the qualities [are the principles of everything]' (Στράτων δὲ ὁ φυσικὸς τὰς ποιότητας [*sc.* εἶπε πάντων εἶναι ἀρχάς], *PH* 3.32 = Ps.-Gal. *Hist.Phil.* 18, *DG* p. 611 = Fr. 43 Wehrli, cf. also Fr. 42).

It is not immediately obvious what is meant by 'qualities' here; it would be reasonable to think of the natural faculties of hot and cold, particularly in view of Fr. 45, from Aëtius 1.3.24: 'Strato [considers] the hot and the cold [to be] elements' (dry and moist are not attested among Strato's fragments). For example, in Fr. 48 we read that 'Strato of Lampsacus said that hot substance is the cause of everything' (Στράτων ἐκ Λαμψάκου τὴν θερμὴν οὐσίαν ἔλεγεν αἰτίαν πάντων ὑπάρχειν).[70] These qualities were listed by Aristotle among the 'principles of perceptible body' (αἰσθητοῦ σώματος ἀρχαί, *GC* 2.2.329b7) and, more specifically, they were associated with 'active' and 'passive' capacities in the things they characterise (*ibid.* 329b24–6). Hot and cold (along with dry and moist) were standard explanatory categories in ancient medicine, and they also played a part in Presocratic cosmology and in attempts by Aristotle and the doxographers to reformulate it in terms of opposite qualities.[71] In all these accounts qualities inhere in and characterise tangible bodies, and even in the doxographical reports on Strato they represent his

[69] Cf. Sedley 1999: 387: 'they do not regard the elements as absolutely primary ingredients of the world, but as themselves further analysable downwards to an even more fundamental level, at which they are finally resolved into the two principles matter and god'.

[70] Cf. Fr. 49, where Strato associates water (rather than air) with the cold, which is referred to as one of the οὐσίαι τῶν δυνάμεων. It is not clear whether Strato himself used the term οὐσία, δύναμις or the ποιότητες attested in Sextus and Pseudo-Galen.

[71] Anaxagoras DK 59 B4; Diogenes of Apollonia DK 64 B5; Alcmaeon DK 24 B4; cf. Wehrli 1950: 54; Lloyd 1964, esp. 96–7.

specification of the material cause (ὑλικὴ αἰτία, in Pseudo-Galen) or principle (περὶ τῶν ὑλικῶν ἀρχῶν, in Sextus).

Yet another complex account of quality as a fundamental physical concept is given by Varro in Cicero's *Ac.* 1.24–9, continuing from the passage cited above (p. 108):

neque enim materiam ipsam cohaerere potuisse si nulla vi contineretur, neque vim sine aliqua materia; nihil est enim quod non alicubi esse cogatur. sed quod ex utroque, id iam corpus et quasi qualitatem quandam nominabant.

For matter couldn't cohere by itself without being contained by some force, nor force without some matter since anything that exists is necessarily somewhere. But it was only the product of both that they called 'body' and, so to speak, a 'quality'. (Cic. *Ac.* 1.24, transl. Brittain)

In the discussion of *Ac.* 1.24–9, amid Cicero's reflection over his novel rendering of ποιότης as *qualitas*, the following relevant remarks may be isolated:[72] (i) quality is a product of matter (*materia*) and force (*vis*); it comes about at the same time as and is somehow the same as body; (ii) primary and simple qualities (*principes, unius modi et simplices*), identified with the four elements, are distinguished from derivative multiform qualities (*ex his ortae variae et quasi multiformes*) that correspond to things in the visible world (*Ac.* 1.26). Of the primary qualities, fire and air are described as having an active 'power/function', water and earth a passive one (*vis movendi et efficiendi . . . accipiendi et quasi patiendi*, *Ac.* 1.26); (iii) there is an underlying kind-of-matter, lacking all quality (*materiam quandam carentem omni illa qualitate*, *Ac.* 1.27), which is then permeated and shaped by the force that has been termed 'quality' (*illa vis quam qualitatem esse diximus*, *Ac.* 1.28); (iv) everything is held together by a perfectly rational nature, the 'force' that is the soul of the world, i.e. god (*quam vim animum esse dicunt mundi, eandemque esse mentem sapientiamque perfectam, quem deum appellant, Ac.* 1.29).

This is not an entirely consistent account of quality, because quality is described both as the product of force and matter (identified with body) and as a force acting upon (shaping) unqualified matter.

[72] For a full discussion of this passage, with references to earlier literature, see Inwood (forthcoming).

For an explanation we may look towards the 'primary' qualities associated with the material elements, two of which possess a *vis movendi et efficiendi* (which Brittain renders as 'function of imparting motion or being active', *Ac.* 1.26), compatible with the concept of material/bodily faculties discussed above, as well as with the Stoic view of quality as a portion of active *pneuma*. These properties of the primary qualities are perhaps what enabled the transition from quality as the outcome of *materia* and *vis* to the seemingly incompatible view of quality as an active force, identifiable even with god.[73]

In any case it emerges that Antiochus' historical reassessment, as reported by Varro, granted quality a fundamental role in the explanation of the world's constitution through the interaction of the active principle and matter.[74] The Antiochean report also raises a point that could play a part in explaining the presence of quality in Potamo's eclectic framework, as it speaks of a matter-like substrate 'without any form and lacking all quality' (*subiectam . . . sine ulla specie atque carentem omni illa qualitate . . . materiam quandam*, *Ac.* 1.27). It was in fact a widespread practice to define matter negatively as that which fundamentally lacks quality, and construe it as an undifferentiated substrate which persists while undergoing changes of quality. This is evident in the Stoics' 'unqualified substance' (ἄποιος οὐσία, D.L. 7.134, cited above; S.E. *PH* 3.31; Calcidius 292), as well as in doxographical reports on Plato (Πλάτων τὴν ὕλην σωματοειδῆ ἄμορφον ἀνείδεον ἀσχημάτιστον ἄποιον, 'Plato [says that] matter is bodily, without form, character, shape or quality', Aët. 1.9.4 from Stobaeus; εἶναι δὲ τὴν ὕλην ἀσχημάτιστον καὶ ἄπειρον, ἐξ ἧς γίνεσθαι τὰ συγκρίματα, 'and [Plato said] that matter is without form and unlimited, and composite things come to be from it', D.L. 3.69; cf. also Simp. *In Ph.* 227.23–228.10).

All these reports owe something to *Tim.* 50c–51b; Timaeus there speaks of the nature that 'has never in any way whatever taken

73 See Brittain 2006: 98 n. 25; Sedley 2002: 57–8. It is particularly hard to reconcile all the different instances of *vis*: (i) the power of the active principle; (ii) the power that is equivalent to the qualities of air and fire; (iii) the world soul.

74 Lévy 2008 reads the same material crediting Cicero with the main ideas, starting from a Stoic framework, and emphasising how the identification of quality with the qualified object/body marks the significant departure from this framework, which opens the door for an incorporeal/non-material reading of the two first 'principles'/entities.

on any characteristic similar to any of the things that enter into it' (μορφὴν οὐδεμίαν ποτὲ οὐδενὶ τῶν εἰσιόντων ὁμοίαν εἴληφεν οὐδαμῇ οὐδαμῶς, 50c1–2), and refers to these immanent characteristics by variously using the terms 'shape', 'forms', 'kinds' (μορφή, ἰδέαι and εἴδη), while leaving their exact nature unexplained on the grounds that it is too difficult, 50c5–6. The exchange of these for the term 'quality' was not problematic by Potamo's time especially since Varro's Antiochean report in Cicero shows that there was Academic precedent for using the term 'quality' for the entities that permeate and shape the undifferentiated receptacle (in Greek this would make the most of the neologism ποιότης at *Tht.* 182a).

An issue that arises from this line of interpretation (as found particularly in Antiochus' version of Academic/Peripatetic physics and the *Timaeus*) is that quality cannot be kept entirely irreducible and independent of the active and passive principles. The nature of this dependence is brought out in Sedley's observation on Varro's report: 'Viewed in their own right, the passive and the active principle are, respectively, prime matter and a creative force; but when they are viewed in any actual combination the passive principle becomes some specific primitive body – whether earth, fire, air or water – and the active principle becomes some specific quality of that body, say heat or wetness.'[75]

QUALITY AS A FUNDAMENTAL COSMIC PRINCIPLE

As far as Potamo is concerned, the scheme introducing quality as one of the 'principles of the universe' (ἀρχὰς τῶν ὅλων) suggests that he intended it to be a more fundamental and higher-level principle than simply a guise of the active force, emerging as a characteristic of body.

Some further indication as to the status of quality in Potamo's physics may be traced in the apparent anomaly of the prepositional scheme, where quality corresponds to an interrogative (or indefinite) rather than a relative pronoun and is not governed by any

[75] Sedley 2002: 57. Lévy 2008: 15 criticises this interpretation, suggesting that it makes Antiochus/Cicero unnecessarily dependent on Stoic views. He prefers to treat *qualitas* as a concept that can sometimes refer to an object and sometimes to a quality (with Cicero's *quasi qualitatem* addressing this ambiguity).

preposition.[76] The dative of the pronoun thus suggests an additional causal relationship, indicative of a further factor that enables fundamental natural processes to take place, functioning alongside matter and the active principle: 'that from which, that by the agency of which', 'by what kind/by a certain kind'[77] (ἐξ οὗ, ὑφ' οὗ, ποίῳ/ποιῷ). For example, in an Aristotelian account which may prove useful for comparison, the four elements (primary bodies) come about from underlying matter, by (the combined presence of) qualities such as hotness, coldness, dryness and wetness. This is made possible by the agency of an active force, such as the motion of the heavenly bodies (*GC* 2.1.329a28–36; 3.330a30–b13; 10.336a 25–32).[78]

We should consider, therefore, the available interpretations on which quality can maintain its standing as a primitive constituent of the world alongside matter and 'that which acts', not dependent on any prior principle. This brings to mind different accounts deriving from the Platonic/Aristotelian tradition. Such a role for quality might involve the Platonic Forms that had been left out of the equation by the two-principle interpretations of Plato discussed above. It appears that the notion of an independent paradigm shaping/directing the action of the active principle upon matter had been reintroduced in some quarters into the interpretation of Plato shortly before Potamo's time, the earliest instance being Varro's interpretation of the mysteries at Samothrace, as reported by Augustine.[79] The traditional Middle Platonist three-principle scheme (cf. Alcin. *Didask.* 9.1) is clearly in evidence in the doxography of Aëtius where, as in Varro, it is

[76] The dative ποίῳ or ποιῷ fits the scheme better than Marcovich's emendation to the rare adverb ποίως, because the reference is to *things* 'by which', 'from which' etc.

[77] One anonymous CUP reader very helpfully proposes the interpretation 'by whatever a thing is like', which highlights that the principle of quality does not amount to any specific quality (e.g. hot or cold).

[78] For generation and corruption Aristotle specifies the elliptical motion as efficient cause, because it admits of opposites (336a31–2).

[79] *in simulacris aliud significare caelum, aliud terram, aliud exempla rerum, quas Plato appellat ideas; caelum Iovem, terram Iunonem, ideas Minervam vult intellegi; caelum a quo fiat aliquid, terram de qua fiat, exemplum secundum quod fiat* (August. *C.D.* 7.28). Cf. Sharples 1995a: 73–82. Mansfeld 2001: 30–2 makes a very interesting point about the origin of this threefold take on Plato's principles, suggesting a possible Peripatetic origin that combines the reports of Aristotle (*Metaph.* 1.6.988a7–10), mentioning matter and form, and of Theophrastus (Fr. 230 Fortenbaugh *et al.*, cited above), mentioning matter and an active principle.

illustrated through a system of prepositional phrases similar to that used in Potamo's case:

Πλάτων Ἀρίστωνος τρεῖς ἀρχάς, τὸν θεὸν τὴν ὕλην τὴν ἰδέαν, ὑφ' οὗ ἐξ οὗ πρὸς ὅ. ὁ δὲ θεὸς νοῦς ἐστι τοῦ κόσμου, ἡ δὲ ὕλη τὸ ὑποκείμενον γενέσει καὶ φθορᾷ, ἰδέα δὲ οὐσία ἀσώματος ἐν τοῖς νοήμασι καὶ ταῖς φαντασίαις τοῦ θεοῦ.

Plato son of Aristo [says that there are] three principles, God and matter and Idea; that by whose agency, that from which, that towards which.[80] God is the mind of the world, matter is that which underlies coming-to-be and passing-away, and Idea is an incorporeal substance in God's thoughts and impressions. (Aët. 1.3.21, from Stobaeus; transl. Sharples)

The doxographer goes on to identify Idea/Form as present in god's thoughts, therefore not entirely independent,[81] but for the present discussion the initial reference to Form as one of the three principles is a sufficient parallel.

Plato's Form-as-principle is also mentioned by Seneca (*idea, Ep.* 65.7), who has a deliberate agenda of subordinating the 'throng of causes' proposed by Plato and Aristotle to the Stoic active/efficient cause.[82] This leads him to suggest that the paradigm (*exemplar*), according to which the world is shaped, is simply an instrument necessary to the 'real' efficient cause (*instrumentum causae necessarium*, 65.13). In the same letter (*Ep.* 65.8) Seneca also makes use of a prepositional scheme similar to Potamo's to describe a five-principle version of Plato's physics. Seneca's comments on the Forms as an instrument, as well as his echoes of the Platonist 'instrumental' principle (ὀργανικόν), which is not however relevant here, are probably behind the reasons for Dillon's proposal to read δι' οὗ ('that through which') instead of ποίῳ ('by what kind') in Diogenes' report on Potamo.[83] But with the transmitted reading Potamo is less liable to

80 This picks up *Tim.* 28a: ὅτου μὲν οὖν ἂν ὁ δημιουργὸς πρὸς τὸ κατὰ ταὐτὰ ἔχον βλέπων ἀεί, τοιούτῳ τινὶ προσχρώμενος παραδείγματι . . .
81 This tactic is analysed in Sharples 1995a.
82 For this tactic of 'elimination by subsumption' see Inwood 2007: 147.
83 Dillon 1977: 138 and n. 1: 'Where one expects *di' hou*, the mss. in fact have an anomalous *poiôi*. I take this as a gloss on *poiotêta* which has crowded out the true reading.' Neoplatonists also spoke of the ὀργανικόν/δι' οὗ cause, but did not connect it with the paradigm (Porph. Fr. 120 Smith = Simp. *In Ph.* 11.1–4; Procl. *In Tim.* 1 357 Diehl). For them it seems to be related to the 'lesser' gods and nature. Cf. Dörrie and Baltes 1996: 379–81, 428–31.

the type of eliminative criticism that Seneca employs against Plato's paradigm as a principle. In other words, Potamo probably did not intend here the same agent/instrument distinction that he articulated for the criterion of truth with the formula δι' οὗ. In this way, quality remains related to the active principle (note the cognate ποιότης–ποιοῦν), but it is not a tool operated by the latter. It represents, rather, the shapes and characteristics that come to inhere in matter in processes ultimately instigated by the agency of the active principle, which does not have to be a demiurge using an instrument.

It is possible that Potamo envisaged his quality principle as more akin to Aristotelian form, which does not carry any divine/transcendent connotations, and is not interpreted as the thought or instrument of some other cosmic force. Immanent form is in fact one of Aristotle's principles alongside the unqualified substrate, e.g. *Ph.* 1.7.191b20: γίγνεται πᾶν ἔκ τε τοῦ ὑποκειμένου καὶ τῆς μορφῆς ('everything comes about from the substrate and the form'; cf. *GC* 2.9.335a28–30; *Metaph.* 12.3.1069b33–1070a2).[84] Potamo's familiarity with such doctrines should not be surprising; we know from the *Suda* that he had written a commentary on the *Republic* and there is also evidence for his study of Aristotle's *On the Heavens* (see below, Chapter 5). He also had grounds for associating the term 'quality' with 'kind', 'shape' or 'form', as we have seen above.

It is the discrepancy in the prepositional scheme that once again complicates matters concerning the association of Potamo's quality with Plato's paradigm or with Aristotle's immanent form. Potamo did not adopt the expressions πρὸς ὅ or καθ' ὅ ('towards which'/ 'with a view to which' or 'according to which') that were prevalent in the doxographical tradition as explanations for Platonic and Aristotelian form respectively, as we can see from the Aëtius extract on Plato cited above and the equivalent on Aristotle's doctrine of the four causes:

Ἀριστοτέλης ἔφησε δηλοῦν ἕκαστον χρώμενον σχήμασι τῆς ἑρμηνείας τοιούτοις, τό τε ἐξ οὗ λέγοντα τὴν ὕλην, καὶ τὸ ὑφ' οὗ τὸ ποιοῦν, τὸ δὲ καθ' ὃ τὸ εἶδος, τὸ δὲ δι' ὃ τὸ τέλος

Aristotle said that one articulates clearly each of the causes if one uses expressions of this kind, calling matter 'that from which', the active principle

[84] Immanent form also features as one of Plato's principles on some interpretations (εἶδος, καθ' ὅ as opposed to παράδειγμα, πρὸς ὅ), cf. the passages from Seneca, Porphyry and Proclus mentioned above, p. 115 and n. 83.

'that by the agency of which', form 'that according to which' and the end 'that on account of which'. (Stob. 1.13, *DG* p. 310)[85]

As we have seen so far, the versions of quality as a fundamental principle that Potamo could turn to in his process of 'selecting from each sect' involve either the basic qualities associated with primary bodies (hot, cold, dry, moist) and the constitutive power attributed to fire and air (including the Stoic *pneuma*), or non-bodily form juxtaposed with the matter it comes to shape, in a tradition going back to the *Timaeus*. Alcinous, too, a century or so later than Potamo, provided an appendix on qualities as the counterpart of undifferentiated matter, which is attached to his discussion of metaphysical first principles.[86] His main point there was to show that qualities are incorporeal, contrary to Stoic theory, but he did not offer any further analysis of the concept of quality and its role; it is understood that it represents form in matter, thus relating to two of the three Middle Platonist first principles (*Didask.* 11).[87]

It is true that the doxographers' rendering of the Platonic and Aristotelian forms using πρὸς ὅ ('that towards which') and καθ' ὅ ('that according to which') would have provided a much neater fit for Potamo's prepositional scheme. It is possible, therefore, to interpret the choice of the more awkward ποίῳ/ποιῷ either as a deliberate variation, or as a stage before the development of more elaborate scholastic schemes. Moreover, given Potamo's date, we cannot disregard possible Stoic influences, particularly their use of ποιός as a technical term for 'qualified'. In this case the emphasis would be on the causal connotations of the dative ποίῳ/ποιῷ, since for the Stoics qualities themselves can have a causal role (since they are portions of *pneuma* disposed in a certain way).

PLACE

Thus far in this discussion the *Timaeus* has been a central text for exploring the role of matter and the active principle as well as quality

[85] Mansfeld 2001: 23 and 52 argues that this report on Aristotle's causes in Stobaeus, which does not appear in Pseudo-Plutarch, comes from Arius Didymus and not Aëtius.

[86] The appendix concludes as follows: ὁ μὲν δὴ περὶ τῶν ἀρχῶν λόγος τοιοῦτος ἄν τις εἴη θεολογικὸς λεγόμενος (*Didask.* 11.3).

[87] Cf. Dillon 1993: 112.

in terms of their status as primary principles. It should not be surprising that Potamo was influenced by ideas from that dialogue, given that it had been very much in the forefront during the first century BC, and was traditionally the place to look for Plato's principles. In particular, we have seen that on one interpretation Potamo's quality principle can be connected to the immanent qualities/characteristics of *Tim.* 49d–51b that enter and shape the underlying substance. The interpretations discussed so far suggest that this concept of quality was cast in a role different from that of the transcendent paradigm (*Tim.* 52a, 48e, 29a), and was thus compatible with traditions that did not involve the Platonic Forms.

Similarly, the *Timaeus* should also be taken into consideration in the attempt to come to terms with Potamo's selection of place as a fourth principle. This brings us to notoriously difficult questions concerning the nature of the receptacle; all the accounts of Plato's principles mentioned so far favour its identification with the passive principle and matter (even if Theophrastus is somewhat cautious, describing it as 'like matter'), which is a constitutive factor rather than the location of perceptible bodies. It is possible, though, that Potamo sought to acknowledge the alternative aspect of this all-receiving (πανδεχές) nature, which is implied by Plato in expressions such as ἐν ᾧ ('that in which', *Tim.* 49e7; 50d1), ἔν τινι τόπῳ ('in a certain place', 52a6) and χώρα ('space', 52a8; 52d3). The presence of quality and place side by side in Potamo's scheme makes one think of modern interpretations that see the receptacle as the *locus* (the 'that-in-which') for qualities, i.e. Forms in their immanent status.[88]

Moreover, there is an important remark in Cicero's Antiochean (and thus probably current in Potamo's time) report on 'early Academic' physics, which highlights the dual role of the Platonic receptacle (see also above p. 111). The active principle always has to be 'somewhere' in order to be cohesive, pointing to its dependence on matter as a location: 'and force cannot be cohesive without some matter; for there is nothing that is not compelled to be somewhere' (*neque vim* [*cohaerere potuisse*] *sine aliqua materia; nihil est enim quod non alicubi esse cogatur*, *Ac.* 1.24).[89] It is true that this passage reflects

[88] Algra 1995: 97.

[89] Matter is similarly made cohesive by being 'contained' (*contineretur*) by some force.

Tim. 52b,[90] but it is put in stronger terms: matter/place is a fundamental principle here because everything is forced to 'be somewhere', whereas Plato makes a more general remark about our 'bastard reasoning' intuitively suggesting to us, as if in a dream, the presence of place as an intermediate type of being, neither intelligible nor sensible.

An interpretation of Potamo's place principle based on the *Timaeus* has the advantage that it creates a coherent picture that also includes quality, drawing on ideas that can be extracted from the receptacle and the immanent characteristics of the *Timaeus*. But a concept of place that is not clearly distinct from matter (and Plato's receptacle is not) does not fully do justice to its status as an independent cosmic principle, irreducible to any other superior entity. Such a role for place at the highest level of physical explanation may be found in an Epicurean context, where *topos* is one facet of the 'intangible substance', one of the permanent constituents of the world, along with body in the form of atoms:

διὸ προληπτέον, ὅτι κατὰ τὸν Ἐπίκουρον τῆς ἀναφοῦς καλουμένης φύσεως τὸ μέν τι ὀνομάζεται κενόν, τὸ δὲ τόπος, τὸ δὲ χώρα, μεταλαμβανομένων κατὰ διαφόρους ἐπιβολὰς τῶν ὀνομάτων, ἐπείπερ ἡ αὐτὴ φύσις ἔρημος μὲν καθεστηκυῖα παντὸς σώματος κενὸν προσαγορεύεται, καταλαμβανομένη δὲ ὑπὸ σώματος τόπος καλεῖται, χωρούντων δὲ δι' αὐτῆς σωμάτων χώρα γίνεται.

Therefore one must grasp that, according to Epicurus, of 'intangible substance', as he calls it, one kind is named 'void', another 'place', and another 'room', the names varying according to the different ways of looking at it, since the same substance when empty of all body is called 'void', when occupied by body is named 'place', and when bodies roam through it becomes 'room'. (S.E. *M.* 10.2, transl. Long and Sedley)

Adopting place as a fundamental principle from the Epicureans would certainly be compatible with Potamo's characterisation as a philosopher who selected ideas from all the other schools. It is not unlikely that Potamo was influenced by their idea of place as an essential component of the world, and employed it to get beyond the problems raised by the receptacle in the *Timaeus*. In Epicurean physics the

[90] ἀναγκαῖον εἶναί που τὸ ὂν ἅπαν ἔν τινι τόπῳ καὶ κατέχον χώραν τινά, τὸ δὲ μήτ' ἐν γῇ μήτε που κατ' οὐρανὸν οὐδὲν εἶναι. Cf. Sedley 2002: 66.

primary status of void/place/room follows from its being a necessary prerequisite for the location and locomotion of physical bodies. This might lead to an interpretation of Potamo's place principle in causal terms, even in the looser sense of 'cause' that includes necessary conditions. But if Potamo intended place as this type of universal prerequisite cause, it seems surprising that he did not include time as well: the two appear together as *sine qua non* in lists of causes/principles in Cicero and Seneca, as well as Pseudo-Archytas and several Platonist texts.[91]

Finally, another related set of considerations that could have played a part in Potamo's adoption of place as a principle is centred on the intuitive belief that something in order to 'be' has to 'be somewhere', an idea that is also present in the *Timaeus* (see above). Sextus Empiricus preserves a doxographical report that has much in common with Potamo's scheme, including the formulation with prepositional phrases, with the important difference that the end (δι' ὅ) is mentioned instead of quality. Sextus' context is the presentation of traditional arguments in favour of the existence of place, and this particular proof employs an analogy with the derivation of the existence of an efficient and a final cause from the existence of matter. The argument includes an appeal to 'the ancients', who attributed to place the status of *arche*:

ὥσπερ τε εἰ τὸ ἐξ οὗ τι γίγνεται ἔστι, καὶ τὸ ὑφ' οὗ τι γίγνεται καὶ τὸ δι' ὅ, οὕτως ὑπάρχοι ἂν καὶ τὸ ἐν ᾧ τι γίγνεται. ἔστι δὲ τὸ ἐξ οὗ τι γίνεται, οἷον ἡ ὕλη, καὶ τὸ ὑφ' οὗ, οἷον τὸ αἴτιον, καὶ τὸ δι' ὅ, καθάπερ τὸ τέλος· ἔστιν ἄρα καὶ τὸ ἐν ᾧ τι γίγνεται, τουτέστιν ὁ τόπος. οἵ τε παλαιοὶ καὶ τὰ ὅλα διακοσμήσαντες ἀρχὴν τῶν πάντων ὑπέθεντο τόπον, κἀντεῦθεν ὁρμηθεὶς ὁ Ἡσίοδος ἀνεφώνησεν·

ἤτοι μὲν πρώτιστα χάος γένετ', αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
γαῖ' εὐρύστερνος, πάντων ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεί,

χάος λέγων τὸν χωρητικὸν τῶν ὅλων τόπον· μὴ ὑποκειμένου γὰρ τούτου οὔτε γῆ οὔτε ὕδωρ οὔτε τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν στοιχείων, οὐχ ὁ σύμπας κόσμος ἐδύνατο συστῆναι.

Just as, if there exists that from which a thing comes to be, and there is also that by the agency of which a thing comes to be and that on account of which it comes to be, so too there will be that in which it comes to

[91] Cic. *Top*. 59; Sen. *Ep*. 65.11; Pseudo-Archytas *ap*. Simp. *In Ph*. 787.3–10; *In Cat*. 361.20–4; for the Platonist texts see Dörrie and Baltes 1996: 433 with n. 2.

> be. But that from which a thing comes to be (namely its matter) exists, and that by the agency of which (namely its cause), and that on account of which (that is, its end); therefore, that in which a thing comes to be (that is, its place) exists also. The ancients also in planning the order of the universe laid down place as the first principle of all things, and starting out from it Hesiod proclaimed: 'In truth at first Chasm came to be, but next | wide-bosomed Earth, the ever-sure foundation of all' [*Theogony* 116–17], meaning by Chasm the place which serves to contain all things; for if this had not subsisted neither earth nor water nor the rest of the elements, nor the universe as a whole, could have been constructed. (S.E. *M.* 10.10–11)

The interpretation of these Hesiodic lines had greatly concerned Epicurus himself, reportedly being the reason he turned to philosophy, as his schoolteacher could not provide any answer to his question about the origin of Chasm (S.E. *M.* 10.18). The same lines are also quoted by Aristotle at *Ph.* 4.1.208.29–31, in the context of assessing the ontological importance of place, because it can exist without anything else while other things cannot exist without it. Similar considerations may have led Potamo to include place among the primary 'principles of all things', in the sense that it cannot be derived from anything more fundamental and thus is not reducible to any of the other *archai*.

Such an account of place, not determined even by the body that occupies it, raises the question whether Potamo was prepared to accept the existence of void within the world (τὰ ὅλα),[92] a question also arising in Aëtius' physical doxography in close proximity with the reports on the principles. The issue must have been of interest to Potamo, because some of his work on Aristotle's *On the Heavens* focused specifically on the geometrical properties of bodies and plane figures that determine whether or not they can fit together without leaving void interstices (see below, Chapter 5). Potamo's position on void cannot be extracted from that work because our surviving fragments concern very specific technical questions, but the presence of place in the same system and at the same level as matter and quality suggests that it must be somehow prior to body, and therefore admissible even as empty space, as in the Epicurean system.

92 As we saw above (p. 106), the reference to principles of 'the wholes' rather than 'the all' probably means that Potamo was not prepared to take extra-cosmic void into account.

POTAMO'S PRINCIPLES

From this analysis it appears that Potamo's principles were aimed at providing a comprehensive account of the world and individual bodies within it ('wholes', see above p. 106), rather than an anthology of existing doctrines. Each of the selected principles plays a specific explanatory role, and while all four can be traced back to some school in some form, their combination is unique to Potamo. There are significant parallels with the doxographical tradition, particularly in the form of verbal echoes as far as the prepositional phrases are concerned.

As with the criterion of truth, the prepositional scheme also has a systematising and unifying function, linking each of the principles to fundamental questions that can be asked about the constitution of the world or particular entities within it: from what, through whose agency, with what quality, where. We can also detect here the operation of some analogy from everyday life, such as that of the artisan making a statue out of bronze, which can be compared to the analogy of an agent using a tool that informed accounts of the criterion. This explanatory focus is a central feature of Potamo's eclectic project, and it coheres well with the elementary and introductory character of his *Stoicheiosis*. It makes sense, therefore, that he should be looking for 'irreducible features of a complete account or explanation of something'[93] (in this case, of the whole world). Such an approach could lead to a proliferation of causes or principles, such as the situation criticised by Seneca in *Ep.* 65.11–14. Prepositional schemes facilitate this type of scholastic proliferation, which became evident in later Platonism (see above n. 62), because they enable one to articulate a wide scope of causal, instrumental and other relationships through the use of different prepositions. It is possible that Potamo was one of the earlier exponents of this method towards the end of the Hellenistic period, since his own scheme is not as seamless and symmetrical as the ones that subsequently became formulaic.

In terms of the order in which these ideas appear in Diogenes' brief report, the fact that the principles are named before the prepositional scheme is introduced makes the latter appear more as a clarification

[93] Hankinson 1999: 479.

or even confirmation (depending on how one interprets the γάρ in the text) for the selection of these particular items.

As far as the content of Potamo's physics is concerned, it is quickly clear that the first two parameters (matter and active principle) represent a wide-ranging consensus among ancient accounts of first principles, and so inevitably the discussion in this chapter has centred on the more controversial principles of quality and place. In an examination of this state of affairs from the perspective of Potamo's overall eclectic project, it appears that his process of selection consisted in identifying the elements that have met with most approval from several schools and thus are likely to be the 'most accurate', and supplementing them with other ideas that are not the object of similar universal approval, but are considered necessary or useful for the explanatory and didactic project. The choice of quality and place in particular suggests that the point of reference for Potamo's explanatory physics was a bodily object that coheres as a whole (ὅλον), since this is formed from matter by the acquisition of some quality or set of qualities and must always be in some place.

Another question concerning the overall nature of Potamo's eclectic project is whether he advocated this list of principles in a prescriptive way as the 'dogma' of his school. We have seen that the items he specified for the criterion of truth admit several interpretations or are suggested *exempli gratia* (see above p. 101). A comparable strategy may be detected in the little we have on his physics (of course we cannot know for certain how he proceeded to elaborate on the initial list). Potamo must have had undifferentiated matter in mind because he posited quality as a separate principle, but the active principle could be a god/demiurge or a less 'personified' force such as an Aristotelian prime mover. As Potamo's scheme stands, one can interpret quality in terms of either transcendent or immanent form, and place can be taken both as void and as the occupied location of body. In this study I have tended to highlight the role of immanent qualities and the possibility of void, but it is significant that other interpretations remain possible within the same framework.

Plato's *Timaeus*, a very influential text in the first century BC, has provided some useful directions for the interpretation of Potamo's physics. However, as an Eclectic, Potamo was able to draw on concepts and ideas from other schools, such as the Peripatetic material

qualities and the Epicurean intangible substance. Finally, we should not disregard the influence on Potamo of already systematised doxographical accounts, and in particular Antiochus' take on early Academic and Peripatetic physics, which contains traces of all of Potamo's principles.

III ETHICS

τέλος δὲ εἶναι ἐφ' ὃ πάντα ἀναφέρεται, ζωὴν κατὰ πᾶσαν ἀρετὴν τελείαν, οὐκ ἄνευ τῶν τοῦ σώματος κατὰ φύσιν καὶ τῶν ἐκτός.

And [he believes] the end is that to which all things are referred, a life perfect with respect to all virtue,[94] not without the things pertaining to the body by nature and external things. (D.L. 1.21)

DEFINING THE *TELOS*

Diogenes here offers a brief report on Potamo's account of the moral end, the supreme good and ultimate goal of human life. It was a central topic of Hellenistic ethics, on which all the dogmatist schools had developed their distinctive positions. In the first century BC, Cicero devoted one of his philosophical treatises to this subject, his *De finibus bonorum et malorum* ('On moral ends') and, as he informs us, Antiochus of Ascalon treated the ethical end, alongside the criterion of truth, as one of the two principal issues in philosophy, defining a thinker's entire intellectual stance and school allegiance (*Luc*. 29).[95]

This brief statement on Potamo, with the use of ἐφ' ὅ, 'that to which', appears to follow the pattern of prepositional phrases employed for his views on the criterion of truth and the first principles of physics. Here, however, the prepositional phrase is not used as shorthand for the purposes of conceptual subdivision or clarification of different causal relationships. Unlike the prepositional phrases appearing in connection with Potamo's criterion and first principles, ἐφ' ὅ here introduces a full relative clause in explanation and definition of the term *telos*. The assumption is that there is an overall goal in life, and that all other goals and actions are thought of in reference

94 See below pp. 127–9 for the possibility of translating: 'a life in accordance with all perfect virtue'.

95 Cf. *Fin*. 4.14: *nunc videamus, quaeso, de summo bono, quod continet philosophiam*, 'let us now enquire about the supreme good, which is the keystone of philosophy'.

to it (ἐφ' ὃ πάντα ἀναφέρεται, 'to which all things are referred'). An alternative way of expressing the ultimate and overarching nature of this *telos* was the observation that it is 'that for the sake of which (οὗ ἕνεκα) everything is done, but is not itself done for the sake of anything else'.[96]

The wording used in the report from Potamo also appears in the doxography attributed to his contemporary Arius Didymus (preserved by Stobaeus), in the reports for both the Stoic and the Peripatetic end. According to this doxography, the Stoics discerned three senses of the term *telos*, one of which was 'the ultimate object of striving to which everything else is referred' (κατὰ δὲ τὸ τρίτον σημαινόμενον λέγουσι τέλος τὸ ἔσχατον τῶν ὀρεκτῶν, ἐφ' ὃ πάντα τὰ ἄλλα ἀναφέρεσθαι, Stob. 2.7, 76.21–3 W).[97] The Peripatetics, on the other hand, pursued a distinction between different senses of 'good' (ἀγαθόν), one of which was the '*telos*, to which we refer all other things, and which is identified with happiness' (τέλος, ἐφ' ὃ πάντα ἀναφέρομεν, ὅπερ ἐστὶν εὐδαιμονία, Stob. 2.7, 134.13–14 W).

In what follows I will examine the two parts of Diogenes' report separately (they are separated by the expression οὐκ ἄνευ, 'not without'), highlighting the relevant parallels from the ethical thought of other philosophical systems. In terms of an overall interpretation of Potamo's moral end, much will depend on the exact force of 'not without'; this expression can be shown to admit of both a 'stronger' and a 'weaker' reading, as we will see below, and was probably chosen by Potamo precisely for this reason, in order to navigate through the contemporary controversy over the role of bodily and external things in the pursuit of happiness without making a definite commitment.

PERFECT LIFE AND PERFECT VIRTUE

The idea that the *telos* for the sake of which everything is done consists in 'living well' or 'happiness' (εὐδαιμονία) was widely agreed upon in ancient ethical thought, but there were different approaches for what

96 This was first expressed by Plato: τέλος εἶναι ἁπασῶν τῶν πράξεων τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ἐκείνου ἕνεκα δεῖν πάντα τἄλλα πράττεσθαι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκεῖνο τῶν ἄλλων (*Grg.* 499e); cf. Arist. *EN* 1.7.1097b1–5; 1.2.1094a18–20; and Stob. (Arius) 2.7, 77.16–17 W, for the Stoic *telos*.

97 The other two senses of *telos* discerned in this passage were the final good (τελικὸν ἀγαθὸν) and the target (σκοπός).

exactly this amounts to and how it can be achieved.[98] In Potamo's case, the first part of his formulation reflects the substantial common ground that existed between the Aristotelian and Stoic positions, both of which privileged virtue above all else. It also suggests that in this case Potamo's eclecticism is narrower and more exclusive than what we have seen so far, since he clearly and categorically excludes the Epicurean view, according to which an account of the *telos* would require reference to pleasure (or absence of pain).

The following examples represent the closest verbal parallels to Potamo's formulation in Peripatetic and Stoic sources:

τὸ ἀνθρώπινον ἀγαθὸν ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια γίνεται κατ᾽ ἀρετήν, εἰ δὲ πλείους αἱ ἀρεταί, κατὰ τὴν ἀρίστην καὶ τελειοτάτην.

The human good turns out to be an activity of soul in accordance with virtue, and if the virtues are more than one, in accordance with the best and most complete. (Arist. *EN* 1.7.1098a16–18)

ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἐστὶν ἡ εὐδαιμονία ψυχῆς ἐνέργειά τις κατ᾽ ἀρετὴν τελείαν, περὶ ἀρετῆς ἐπισκεπτέον ἂν εἴη·

Since happiness is some activity of soul in accordance with complete virtue, we should examine the subject of virtue. (Arist. *EN* 1.13.1102a4–5; cf. *EE* 2.1.1219a39)

τέλος δέ φασιν εἶναι τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν, οὗ ἕνεκα πάντα πράττεται, αὐτὸ δὲ πράττεται μὲν οὐδενὸς δὲ ἕνεκα· τοῦτο δὲ ὑπάρχειν ἐν τῷ κατ᾽ἀρετὴν ζῆν, ἐν τῷ ὁμολογουμένως ζῆν, ἔτι, ταὐτοῦ ὄντος, ἐν τῷ κατὰ φύσιν ζῆν.

They [the Stoics] say that being happy is the end, for the sake of which everything is done, and which is itself enacted, but not for the sake of anything. This consists in living in accordance with virtue, in living in agreement, or in living in accordance with nature, which is the same thing. (Stob. 2.7, 77.16–20 W = *SVF* 3.16)

διόπερ πρῶτος ὁ Ζήνων ἐν τῷ Περὶ ἀνθρώπου φύσεως τέλος εἶπε τὸ ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν, ὅπερ ἐστὶ κατ᾽ ἀρετὴν ζῆν.

Therefore Zeno in his book *On the Nature of Man* was the first to say that living in agreement with nature, which is living in accordance with virtue, is the end. (D.L. 7.87 = *SVF* 3.178)

[98] Cf. Arist. *EN* 1.4.1095a17–26.

The Stoics were the radical champions of virtue's sufficiency for happiness, arguing also that there is no middle ground between virtue and vice (D.L. 7.127). We should note that the passages cited above from Stobaeus and especially from Diogenes connect 'living in accordance with virtue' with the more celebrated Stoic definition of the moral end, which does not appear to have been adopted by Potamo, namely 'living in agreement with nature'. Meanwhile, the Peripatetic emphasis on the pre-eminence of virtue for achieving the happy life, already present in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, is prominent in first-century BC doxographical accounts, for instance in Arius Didymus (Stob. 2.7, 123.21–27 W) and in the theory attributed to 'the ancients' by Cicero's Antiochean spokesmen, an alleged Old Academic/Peripatetic consensus (e.g. *Fin.* 4.37, 59; 5.71; *Ac.* 1.22).[99]

Returning to Diogenes' report on Potamo, the parallels cited above raise some second thoughts on how we should interpret the wording, more specifically whether the epithet 'perfect/complete' (in ζωὴν κατὰ πᾶσαν ἀρετὴν τελείαν) characterises the life that constitutes the end, or all virtue.[100] Are we then to understand a reference to perfect/complete life or to perfect/complete virtue? This question makes a difference as regards the extent to which Potamo might be adopting certain distinctions found in the Arius doxography, which is an important point of comparison. For instance, the Stoics are said there to have distinguished between 'perfect' virtues (the four cardinal ones and those directly subordinate to them), and 'additional' or 'supervening' ones acquired through practice (Stob. 2.7, 60–2 W, esp. 62.15–16). A parallel report on the Peripatetics is found in the same source, where complete virtue and complete life appear side by side: εὐδαιμονίαν δ' εἶναι 'χρῆσιν ἀρετῆς τελείας ἐν βίῳ τελείῳ χορηγουμένην'[101], ἢ 'ζωῆς τελείας ἐνέργειαν κατ' ἀρετήν' ('happiness is "the employment of perfect virtue with [adequate] resources in a complete life" or "the actuality of a perfect life according to virtue"', Stob. 2.7, 130.18–20 W; cf. Arist. *EN* 1.10.1101a14–16). Perfect virtue is subsequently identified in Stobaeus with justice or nobleness

99 Cf. Irwin 1986: 213.

100 Most modern translators of Diogenes' text opt for the former interpretation, e.g. 'life made perfect in all virtue' (Hicks, Loeb), 'la vie parfaite conforme à toute vertu' (Goulet).

101 This is Wachsmuth's emendation of προηγουμένην; see Huby 1983: 125–7.

(καλοκἀγαθία),[102] as opposed to good natural disposition (εὐφυΐα) or moral progress (προκοπή), which are 'imperfect' (ἀτελεῖς) virtues. If Potamo had in mind these distinctions and specifications, which are compatible with both Stoic and Peripatetic pronouncements, then it would be appropriate to take the adjective 'perfect' to be describing virtue and translate 'life in accordance with all perfect virtue'. The implication would be that the 'imperfect' or 'additional' virtues do not form an integral part of the *telos*. This would have the further advantage of maintaining the formula of 'living according to virtue' (κατ' ἀρετὴν ζῆν).

Even though this reading remains technically possible, it also presents problems, mainly because the word order favours a construal of the adjective 'perfect' (τελείαν) with 'life' (ζωὴν). This perfect/complete life is defined by Aristotle and in Stobaeus in terms of appropriate duration, because a full lifetime is essential if one is to achieve happiness (Stob. 2.7, 131.19–132.6 W; cf. Arist. *EN* 1.7.1098a18–20). Thus in a Peripatetic context a 'perfect life' is understood primarily in terms of the right length. However, such a meaning cannot be extracted from the wording of the report on Potamo because the words 'according to all virtue' (κατὰ πᾶσαν ἀρετήν) intervene between 'life' and 'perfect'. The alternative is to look for ways in which a life can be complete/perfect other than in terms of duration, since any end has to be complete according to Aristotle (*EN* 1.7.1097a25–34; 1097b18–21). On this reading, the intervening phrase 'according to all virtue' specifies how this life achieves perfection, and we must abandon the parallel with 'living in accordance with virtue', as most translators have done.

In a Stoic definition of right action, one finds a parallel for the idea that perfection consists in the presence of all virtue(s): οὔτε γὰρ ἄνδρα φασὶ τέλειον εἶναι τὸν μὴ πάσας ἔχοντα τὰς ἀρετὰς οὔτε πρᾶξιν τελείαν, ἥτις οὐ κατὰ πάσας πράττεται τὰς ἀρετάς ('for they say that a man who does not possess all the virtues is not perfect, and no action is perfect which is not done in accordance with all the virtues', Plut., *De Stoicorum repugnantiis* 1046F = *SVF* III 299); φασὶ δὲ καὶ πάντα ποιεῖν τὸν σοφὸν <κατὰ> πάσας τὰς ἀρετάς. πᾶσαν γὰρ πρᾶξιν τελείαν αὐτοῦ εἶναι, διὸ καὶ μηδεμιᾶς

[102] Cf. *EE* 7.15.1249a15: ἔστιν οὖν καλοκἀγαθία ἀρετὴ τέλειος.

ἀπολελεῖφθαι ἀρετῆς ('they also say that the sage does everything in accordance with all the virtues; for every one of his actions is perfect and so does not lack any virtue', Stob. 2.7, 65.12–14 W = *SVF* III 557).[103] The correspondence with Potamo's formulation is particularly strengthened by the reference to *all* virtue(s) in both cases (πᾶσαν/πάσας). Therefore, based on the more natural construal of the word order and this Stoic parallel, the more appropriate translation for the first part of Potamo's specification of the moral end is 'a life that is perfect with respect to all virtue'. This means that (i) he is not drawing on a distinction between perfect and imperfect virtues, and (ii) he is not mechanically adopting the formula 'life/living in accordance with virtue'.

OTHER FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE *TELOS*

This interpretation leaves open the possibility that 'all virtue' is not the only factor that plays a role in making life 'perfect' or 'complete'; a life may be complete with respect to all virtue but lacking in other respects. The issue of what other items might contribute towards the sort of life that Potamo identifies with the end is raised in the second part of the brief report: οὐκ ἄνευ τῶν τοῦ σώματος κατὰ φύσιν καὶ τῶν ἐκτός ('not without the things that naturally pertain to the body and external things'). The other candidates mentioned here reflect the traditional practice of dividing things that play a part in human welfare into (i) those pertaining to the soul (virtues), (ii) those pertaining to the body (beauty, strength, health etc.), and (iii) external ones (wealth, good birth, fame, friendship, peace etc.), a division which had become commonplace in Hellenistic philosophy. It is particularly prominent in the doxographical accounts for the Peripatetic school despite the relatively small part it played in Aristotle's own ethical theory:[104] Stob. 2.7, 124–5 and 136 W; D.L. 5.30; Cic. *Ac.* 1.19–21;[105] *Tusc.* 5.85; *Fin.* 5.12–14; Clem.

[103] Cf. Stob. 2.7, 98.14–17 W: πάντα δὲ τὸν καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἄνδρα τέλειον εἶναι λέγουσι διὰ τὸ μηδεμιᾶς ἀπολείπεσθαι ἀρετῆς.

[104] Cf. Bett 1997: 83.

[105] The Antiochean speaker here claims that there is no difference between Academics and Peripatetics: this makes sense in this case given the evidence from both Plato and Aristotle. For parallels from other Old Academics and Peripatetics see Bett 1997: 83–4.

Strom. 2.128.5.[106] A comparable tripartition of goods is found already in Plato (*Grg.* 467e; 477c; *Alc.* 132b–c; *Lg.* 697 a–b), and Aristotle himself makes use of it at *EN* 1.8.1098b12–15: νενεμημένων δὴ τῶν ἀγαθῶν τριχῇ, καὶ τῶν μὲν ἐκτὸς λεγομένων τῶν δὲ περὶ ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα . . . ('given that the goods have been divided into three, and some are said to be external, others to relate to the soul and body respectively . . . '), cf. *Pol.* 7.1.1323a24–7.

There is a report in Sextus (*M.* 11.45–6, with a briefer version at *PH* 3.180–1) of this tripartite categorisation of goods (presented as an Academic/Peripatetic consensus),[107] as well as of the differing Stoic point of view. The Stoics of course denied the characterisation 'good' to anything that was not identified with, closely associated with or participating in moral excellence, and yet at some point they too felt the need to supply a *trigeneia* of goods, reflecting their distinct position. Apart from Sextus, the Stoic classification is also found at Stob. 2.7, 70.8–20 W and D.L. 7.95:[108]

ἔτι τῶν ἀγαθῶν τὰ μὲν εἶναι περὶ ψυχήν, τὰ δ' ἐκτός, τὰ δ' οὔτε περὶ ψυχὴν οὔτ' ἐκτός. τὰ μὲν περὶ ψυχὴν ἀρετὰς καὶ τὰς κατὰ ταύτας πράξεις· τὰ δ' ἐκτὸς τό τε σπουδαίαν ἔχειν πατρίδα καὶ σπουδαῖον φίλον καὶ τὴν τούτων εὐδαιμονίαν· τὰ δ' οὔτ' ἐκτὸς οὔτε περὶ ψυχὴν τὸ αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ εἶναι σπουδαῖον καὶ εὐδαίμονα.

Furthermore, [they say that] of the goods some belong to the soul, others are external and others are neither external nor belonging to the soul. And those belonging to the soul are the virtues and the actions undertaken in accordance with them; external goods are having a virtuous country and a virtuous friend, and their happiness; neither external nor belonging to the soul is being virtuous and happy in relation to oneself. (D.L. 7.95)

Whatever our eventual assessment of the role reserved for attributes other than virtue in Potamo's account of the end, we must observe that from a methodological point of view he employed the Academic/Peripatetic tripartition rather than the significantly different Stoic version. The Stoic division has no place for bodily attributes and reserves a peculiar heading for the virtuous human being in relation to herself, because she can be neither external to herself nor a feature

[106] See also Mansfeld 1992: 148–9. In some of the more standardised versions one finds the formulaic expression ἡ τριγένεια τῶν ἀγαθῶν (Clem. *Strom.* 2.128.5; Hippol. *Haer.* I 20.5; S.E. *PH* 3.181; Eus. *PE* 11.4.1).

[107] οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀκαδημίας καὶ τοῦ Περιπάτου τρία γένη φασὶν εἶναι τῶν ἀγαθῶν.

[108] For differences between this and Sextus' report see Bett 1997: 84–5.

of her own soul. Nevertheless, there are traces of the 'Peripatetic' tripartition even within reports of Stoic theory, where it is applied to preferred and dispreferred indifferents:

τῶν δὲ προηγμένων τὰ μὲν εἶναι περὶ ψυχήν, τὰ δὲ περὶ σῶμα, τὰ δ' ἐκτός. . . . τῶν δ' ἀποπροηγμένων περὶ ψυχὴν μὲν εἶναι τὰ ἐναντία τοῖς εἰρημένοις· περὶ σῶμα δὲ καὶ ἐκτὸς τὰ ὁμοίως ἀντιτιθέμενα τοῖς εἰρημένοις περί τε σῶμα καὶ τοῖς ἐκτὸς προηγμένοις. . . . τῆς δὲ ψυχῆς οὔσης κυριωτέρας τοῦ σώματος καὶ πρὸς τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ζῆν φασὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν κατὰ φύσιν ὄντα καὶ προηγμένα πλείονα τὴν ἀξίαν ἔχειν τῶν περὶ σῶμα καὶ τῶν ἐκτός.

Of preferred things, some concern the soul, others the body, others [are] external.[109] . . . Of the dispreferred, those concerning the soul are the opposites of the ones we mentioned; [dispreferred indifferents] concerning the body and external are the ones similarly opposed to the preferred things we mentioned, both of the body and external.[110] . . . And since the soul plays a more important role than the body also in terms of living in accordance with nature, they say that natural and preferred things that concern the soul have more value than bodily and external ones. (Stob. 2.7, 80.22–81.10; 81.19–82.2 W)

It is interesting that, even though one might expect the division of preferred indifferents according to location (soul, body, outside) to be non-evaluative, a comparative evaluation is nevertheless introduced in the same way as in the Peripatetic division of goods (cf. Arist. *EN* 1.8.1098b14–16; Stob. 2.7, 123.21–124.13 W), whereby those concerning the soul are superior.[111]

If, however, a Stoic account of the *end* were to include indifferents such as bodily and external things that are according to nature, it would be liable to tough criticisms arising from the discrepancy between attaching value to natural things and accordance with nature on the one hand, and claiming that only virtue is good and relevant for happiness on the other. In fact such a debate was already in place from the second century BC onwards, sparked by Carneades' criticism of the formulas specifying the end in terms of expertise in the selection

[109] Preferred indifferents concerning the soul include natural ability, memory, sharpness of mind; the bodily ones are health, keen senses etc.; externals include parents, children, moderate possessions etc.

[110] The same distinction is applied to things that are 'neither preferred not dispreferred' (81.11–18).

[111] See also Hahm 1983: 18.

of things that are according to nature.[112] By the first century BC the debate had become more formalised and entrenched (as we can see from Cicero's *De finibus*) and the central point of contention in terms of happiness and its components was the status of the items classified as bodily and external in the Academic/Peripatetic system. Cicero describes the dispute in emphatic terms:

pugnant Stoici cum Peripateticis. alteri negant quicquam esse bonum, nisi quod honestum sit, alteri plurimum se et longe longeque plurimum tribuere honestati, sed tamen et in corpore et extra esse quaedam bona. et certamen honestum et disputatio splendida!

There is a dispute between the Stoics and the Peripatetics. The Stoics argue that there is nothing good except what is moral, the Peripatetics claim that there are certain bodily and external goods as well, even while attributing far and away the greatest value to morality. Here we have a truly honourable contest, a tremendous clash! (Cic. *Fin.* 2.68, transl. Woolf, modified)

Aristotle had clearly stated that the achievement of the end involves, apart from virtue, a reasonable supply of bodily and external goods, and that severe misfortune is detrimental to happiness (e.g. *EN* 1.8.1099a31–b7; 1.10.1101a14–16; *Pol.* 7.1.1323a24–7). Later Peripatetics may have been even more positive about this (cf. Cicero's comment that Theophrastus 'weakened virtue because he denied that the happy life depended only on it', *Ac.* 1.33),[113] and doxographical accounts are also very emphatic about the *telos* being comprised of *all three* kinds of goods (cf. D.L. 5.30). The Stoics, on the other hand, maintained that the wise man can be happy irrespective of any misfortunes or lack of health, strength etc. because none of these things, but only moral excellence, is truly good or bad (when it is lacking), and therefore relevant for the end and happiness (e.g. Cic. *Fin.* 3.43–5; *Ac.* 1.35 on Zeno: *omnia quae[que] ad beatam vitam pertinerent in una virtute poneret*, 'his position was that everything belonging to the happy life depends on virtue alone', transl. Brittain).

[112] Such formulas may be found in Stob. 2.7, 76.9–15 W: Διογένης δέ· 'εὐλογιστεῖν ἐν τῇ τῶν κατὰ φύσιν ἐκλογῇ καὶ ἀπεκλογῇ' . . . Ἀντίπατρος δέ· 'ζῆν ἐκλεγομένους μὲν τὰ κατὰ φύσιν, ἀπεκλεγομένους δὲ τὰ παρὰ φύσιν διηνεκῶς'. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ οὕτως ἀπεδίδου· 'πᾶν τὸ καθ' αὑτὸν ποιεῖν διηνεκῶς καὶ ἀπαραβάτως πρὸς τὸ τυγχάνειν τῶν προηγουμένων κατὰ φύσιν'.

[113] *spoliavit enim virtutem suo decore imbecillamque reddidit quod negavit in ea sola positum esse beate vivere.*

What caused real complications and controversy was, as we have seen, the fact that the Stoics did in fact attach some value to things like health and wealth, albeit not the kind of value that contributes towards happiness. Most of Cicero's *De finibus* 3–5 is devoted to a debate about the validity or potential contradictions of this position. The critics insist that the Stoics must admit either that they differ from the Peripatetic view only in terminology (calling 'preferred' things that are the same as 'good'), or that their views are identical to those of Pyrrho and Aristo of Chios, who denied any value to everything apart from morality (*Fin.* 4.59–60 and *passim*).

BETWEEN THE STOIC AND PERIPATETIC POSITIONS

Not too long prior to Potamo's time, Antiochus of Ascalon updated the position of Aristotle and the Old Academy in order to take account of Stoic theory. The upshot was a distinction between the 'happy' and the 'happiest' life, resulting from his attempt to accommodate both the sufficiency of virtue for happiness and a further contribution from bodily and external goods. This idea is attributed to Antiochus himself at Cic. *Luc.* 134, while Varro and Piso (the Antiochean spokesmen of *Ac.* 1 and *Fin.* 5 respectively) attribute it to the ancient Academic/Peripatetic consensus, as at *Ac.* 1.22: *itaque omnis illa antiqua philosophia sensit in una virtute esse positam beatam vitam, nec tamen beatissimam, nisi adiungerentur et corporis et cetera quae supra dicta sunt ad virtutis usum idonea* ('so the consensus of all that ancient philosophy was that the happy life depends on virtue alone, but it is not the happiest life unless bodily [goods] and the rest that we described above as conducive to the exercise of virtue are added'; cf. *Fin.* 5.71, 81).

Potamo's formulation, however, is more elusive. He links bodily and external advantages to the life that constitutes the *telos* through the expression 'not without' (οὐκ ἄνευ), a strategy that looks like an attempted compromise between inclusion and exclusion of the items in question.[114] With a stronger inclusive sense of 'not without',

114 Thus Tarrant 1985: 84; cf. 45, 149 n. 17 for the role of οὐκ ἄνευ as a technical formula in Platonism. Prior to Potamo's time it was associated mainly with the Peripatetic tradition and it occurs fifty times in the Aristotelian corpus, nine of which are in the *Magna moralia*.

Potamo's view approaches the one that is traditionally associated with the Peripatetics, namely that the completely happy life includes some moderate physical advantages in the form of health, strength, wealth etc. There is a parallel for this way of treating external goods in the *Magna moralia*, where the context suggests that they are indispensable for happiness: ἐπεὶ οὖν ἐστιν ἡ εὐδαιμονία οὐκ ἄνευ τῶν ἐκτὸς ἀγαθῶν, ταῦτα δὲ γίνεται ἀπὸ τῆς εὐτυχίας, οἷον ἀρτίως ἔφαμεν, συνεργὸς ἂν εἴη τῇ εὐδαιμονίᾳ ('since happiness is not without external goods, and these result from good fortune, as we just said, then [good fortune] would be a contributor to happiness', *MM* 2.8.1207b16). The syntactical position of οὐκ ἄνευ here, with the negative attached to the preposition rather than the verb, suggests that it was a formulaic expression.

In Aristotle's genuine ethical works we find a related use of 'not without', stressing that something is fundamentally related but not identified with something else, e.g. ὅτι μὲν γὰρ φρονήσεις ᾤετο εἶναι πάσας τὰς ἀρετάς, ἡμάρτανεν, ὅτι δ' οὐκ ἄνευ φρονήσεως, καλῶς ἔλεγεν ('for he [Socrates] was mistaken in so far as he thought that all the virtues are kinds of *phronesis*, but he was right in saying that they are not without *phronesis*', *EN* 6.13.1144b20–2; cf. *EN* 2.5.1106a4–5).[115] Such a usage seems plausible in Potamo's case, and is compatible with the Peripatetic tradition that makes bodily and external attributes contributory factors but not central priorities for happiness, since morality holds the principal role.

This leads us to a weaker construal of 'not without', on which the items it governs are conditions that need to be present in order to make a perfect life possible, but do not actually play an essential role in this life, and are not part of its definition. Aristotle had also made this distinction between 'with' and 'not without', the latter being presumably the weaker variant: τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἀρετὴ τοῖς δὲ φρόνησις ἄλλοις δὲ σοφία τις εἶναι δοκεῖ, τοῖς δὲ ταῦτα ἢ τούτων τι μεθ' ἡδονῆς ἢ οὐκ ἄνευ ἡδονῆς· ἕτεροι δὲ καὶ τὴν ἐκτὸς εὐετηρίαν

115 There are also some instances that are particularly difficult to interpret, e.g. *EN* 1.7.1098a7–8: εἰ δ' ἐστὶν ἔργον ἀνθρώπου ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια κατὰ λόγον ἢ μὴ ἄνευ λόγου (Broadie and Rowe 2002: 277: 'it is not clear what the difference is between "in accordance with reason" and "not apart from reason"').

συμπαραλαμβάνουσιν ('for some people think that it [*sc.* happiness] is virtue, others that it is *phronesis*, others some kind of wisdom; others think that it is these things, or one of these, *together with pleasure or not without pleasure*,[116] while others include external prosperity as well', *EN* 1.8.1098b24–6).

The distinction between a stronger and a weaker reading of 'not without' allows for an interpretation that brings Potamo closer to the Stoic position, according to which bodily and external things are indifferent with respect to happiness, i.e. do not form part of the definition of the *telos*, but nevertheless have some secondary role to play. In fact the Stoics believed that the rational pursuit (or avoidance) of indifferent things promotes the acquisition of virtue, and thus can be taken as having a role in the happy life. A further consideration in favour of Potamo having Stoic indifferents in mind here is that (at least as it appears from the short sentence preserved by Diogenes) he refrained from calling bodily and external things 'goods' (ἀγαθά), but focused on their 'according to nature' (κατὰ φύσιν) character, the very thing that, according to the Stoics, made them valuable albeit not in the same way as real goods (cf. Stob. 2.7, 80.9–13 W).

The distinction between necessary conditions and factors that actually *bring about* a result (in our case happiness) also features in the Stoic theory of causation, where τὰ ὧν οὐκ ἄνευ (the *sine qua non*) do not form part of the actual processes whose causes are under investigation, but are nevertheless required if the process is to take place (cf. Clem. *Strom.* 8.9.25 = *SVF* II 346, where time is given as an example of a necessary condition for a pupil's learning).[117] The question of what factors other than those principally responsible for an outcome (such as necessary conditions) can qualify as causes and in what way was also explored by Cicero, *Top.* 58–61, with a slightly different approach at *Fat.* 34–7.[118] The distinction between 'real' causes and enabling conditions marked by the expression οὐκ ἄνευ

[116] Irwin and Fine translate: 'involving pleasure or requiring its addition'.

[117] ἑξῆς δὲ πάντα τὰ αἴτια ἐπὶ τοῦ μανθάνοντος δεικτέον. ὁ μὲν πατὴρ αἴτιόν ἐστι προκαταρκτικὸν τῆς μαθήσεως, ὁ διδάσκαλος δὲ συνεκτικόν, ἡ δὲ τοῦ μανθάνοντος φύσις συνεργὸν αἴτιον, ὁ δὲ χρόνος τῶν ὧν οὐκ ἄνευ λόγον ἐπέχει.

[118] *Top.* 61: *hoc igitur sine quo non fit, ab eo in quo certe fit diligenter est separandum.* See also Sharples 1995b.

is found already in Plato, *Phd.* 99b, while the treatment of necessary prerequisites as causes is also challenged by Seneca, *Ep.* 65.11.[119]

More specifically on the question of the moral end, Alexander of Aphrodisias argued for a direct causal relationship between virtue and things that are according to nature, but his report suggests that the Stoics treated them only as conditions (οὐδὲ γάρ, ὡς φασίν, τὸν ὧν οὐκ ἄνευ λόγον ἔχει ταῦτα, ἀλλ' ἔστιν κινητικὰ τῆς ἀρετῆς καὶ τοῦ πράττειν αὐτὴν καὶ ἐνεργεῖν αἴτια, 'these things do not fall, as they claim, under the category of *sine qua non*, but they mobilise virtue and are causes of its acting and functioning', *Mantissa* 20.160. 12–13).

The doxography ascribed to Arius Didymus, which on this attribution must be contemporary with Potamo, contains an attempt to get to grips with the problem of the role played by bodily and external things from a Peripatetic point of view (Stob. 2.7, 126.12–127.2; 129.18–131.13 W). A fine distinction is drawn between different ways in which things can relate to happiness, i.e. either as parts which complete the whole (μέρος, συμπληρωτικὸν τοῦ ὅλου), or as contributing factors which, when present, are 'productive' of happiness (ποιητικὰ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας τῷ συμβάλλεσθαί τι παρόντα). The main point is that happiness is equivalent to a certain kind of life, and that therefore its constituents can only be actions (Stob. 2.7, 126.23–4 W). The objects and items classed under 'bodily and external things' are not actions and as such cannot be constituent parts of happiness. Nevertheless, they are productive of happiness in some sense, and this relationship is articulated by the doxographer in terms of contribution, conduciveness and co-operation (συμβάλλεσθαι, φέρειν καὶ συνεργεῖν εἰς τὸ τέλος), often with the use of prepositional phrases to denote the various correlations:

> τὰ γὰρ ὧν ἄνευ πράττειν ὁτιοῦν ἀδύνατον, μέρη τῆς ἐνεργείας λέγειν οὐκ ὀρθόν. τὸ μὲν γὰρ μέρος ἐπινοεῖσθαι κατὰ τὸ συμπληρωτικὸν εἶναι τοῦ ὅλου, τὰ δ' ὧν οὐκ ἄνευ κατὰ τὸ ποιητικόν, τῷ φέρειν καὶ συνεργεῖν εἰς τὸ τέλος.

[119] *Phd.* 99b: 'in reality a cause is one thing, and the thing without which (ἐκεῖνο ἄνευ οὗ) the cause could never be a cause is quite another thing'. Seneca's expression is *quocumque remoto quid effici non potest.* I am grateful to one anonymous CUP reader for drawing my attention to these passages.

It is not right to say that those things without which an action cannot take place are parts of the activity. For a part is conceived in terms of its completing the whole, whereas the *sine qua non* [are conceived] in terms of their productive function, by being conducive and co-operating towards the end. (Stob. 2.7, 130.8–12 W)

οὐκ εἶναι συμπλήρωμα τὸ τέλος ἐκ τῶν σωματικῶν καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἔξωθεν ἀγαθῶν οὐδὲ τὸ τυγχάνειν ἁπάντων, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τὸ κατ' ἀρετὴν ζῆν ἐν τοῖς περὶ σῶμα καὶ τοῖς ἔξωθεν ἀγαθοῖς ἢ πᾶσιν ἢ τοῖς πλείστοις καὶ κυριωτάτοις.

The end is not a whole composed out of bodily and external goods, nor is it the achievement of them all. Rather, it is living in accordance with virtue in/among bodily and external goods, either all or the majority and the most important ones. (Stob. 2.7, 126.14–18 W)

We can see therefore how writers such as Potamo and Arius in the late first century BC were grappling with these fine distinctions by introducing systematic classifications and relations expressed by prepositional phrases. An interesting parallel is Clement's report on Xenocrates' specification of what constitutes happiness. This report is structured in causal terms and employs the familiar device of prepositional phrases, revealing traces of a methodology that was characteristic of Potamo's period:[120]

Ξενοκράτης τε ὁ Καλχηδόνιος τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν ἀποδίδωσι κτῆσιν τῆς οἰκείας ἀρετῆς καὶ τῆς ὑπηρετικῆς αὐτῇ δυνάμεως. εἶτα ὡς μὲν ἐν ᾧ γίνεται, φαίνεται λέγων τὴν ψυχήν· ὡς δ' ὑφ' ὧν, τὰς ἀρετάς· ὡς δ' ἐξ ὧν, ὡς μερῶν, τὰς καλὰς πράξεις καὶ τὰς σπουδαίας ἕξεις τε καὶ διαθέσεις καὶ κινήσεις καὶ σχέσεις· ὡς δ' ὧν οὐκ ἄνευ, τὰ σωματικὰ καὶ τὰ ἐκτός.

Xenocrates of Chalcedon defines happiness as the possession of one's proper virtue and the ability which serves this virtue. Then he clearly specifies the soul as that in which it comes about; as regards those things by whose agency [it comes about, he specifies] the virtues; as for the things from which [it is constituted] as parts, [he specifies] noble actions and excellent states, dispositions, movements and relationships [of the soul]; as regards the *sine qua non*, these are the bodily and external things. (Clem. *Strom.* 2.22.133 = Xenocrates Fr. 232 Parente)

[120] According to Dillon 2003: 141 with n. 152, the prepositional scheme should not be attributed to Xenocrates himself but rather to 'late Hellenistic scholasticism'.

Moreover, it is possible that Aristotle too availed himself of the idea that bodily and external goods play the role of prerequisite conditions: at *EN* 1.8.1099a31–b8 he describes external goods as resources and means (καθάπερ δι᾽ ὀργάνων) or 'enabling conditions' that facilitate the performance of virtuous actions. He also points out that their absence might diminish one's happiness, even if virtuous actions can still be carried out.[121] As Long has indicated, the remaining difference from the Stoics is that for the latter bodily and external things that are according to nature are conditions that remain external to the agent (as time is to the pupil), whereas for Aristotle the condition is precisely the agent's acquisition of them.[122]

It is hard to say with full certainty whether Potamo would have made use of these nuances because we have no indication of the kind of analysis he offered.[123] We can, however, interpret his formulation as a response to the controversy that was still on-going in the first century BC concerning the relative contributions of virtue and bodily and external goods to happiness, and we have seen parallel examples of subtle distinctions and use of prepositional phrases in Potamo's contemporary Arius Didymus. Potamo did not follow Antiochus' attempt to achieve a compromise between the two conceptions of the end by positing the hybrid 'happiest life'. Instead, the way in which he proposed to overcome the dispute was through the (perhaps deliberately) ambiguous 'not without' formula, which serves to include bodily and external attributes, but in a secondary and subordinate way, without making them part of the essential definition of the end. As we saw, the same formula had been employed extensively by Aristotle and other Peripatetic writers, and it also features in doxographical accounts of the Stoics and the early Academy.

Thus in the case of the moral end the result of Potamo's selection of ideas from the different schools is an amalgam whose components are not clearly distinguished, and a formulation using language that can be read in different ways but does not amount to a new conception of the end. If this appears more like a syncretistic account, with different points of view reduced to a position of agreement, it is due on the

121 Cf. Broadie and Rowe 2002: 281–2. 122 Long 1968: 75–6.

123 For a possible indication of Potamo's treatment of luck and wealth among external 'goods' see below pp. 164–5.

one hand to our lack of any further information on how Potamo envisaged the role of bodily and external factors, and on the other hand to the fact that the Peripatetic and Stoic views of the moral end did not differ substantially in what was their most important aspect, namely the predominant role of virtue, or in the attribution of a certain value to bodily and external things.

CHAPTER 5

Potamo and Aristotle's On the Heavens

MATHEMATICAL PRINCIPLES ARE LIMITED IN QUANTITY

There are two references to Potamo in Simplicius' commentary on Aristotle's *On the Heavens*.[1] Both come from his comments on the third book of the work, which contains Aristotle's discussion of the earthly elements, their number and properties, and is dominated by a critique of earlier theories. The first reference to Potamo is part of Simplicius' discussion of Aristotle's views on the number of elements. Aristotle introduces the topic as follows: πότερον δὲ πεπερασμένα ἢ ἄπειρα, καὶ εἰ πεπερασμένα, πόσα τὸν ἀριθμόν, ἑπόμενον ἂν εἴη σκοπεῖν ('the next thing would be to examine whether they are limited or infinite, and if they are limited, how many in number', *Cael.* 3.4.302b10–11). More specifically, Potamo's intervention is related to the criticism of the view Aristotle ascribes to Anaxagoras, namely that there is an infinite number of entities, divisible into parts that are the same as each other and the whole (ὁμοιομερῆ), which Aristotle treats as equivalent to his elements. He argues that even on Anaxagoras' view one need not postulate an infinite number:

ἔτι δ' οὐδ' οὕτως λαμβάνοντας τὸ στοιχεῖον ἀνάγκη ποιεῖν ἄπειρα· πάντα γὰρ ταὐτὰ ἀποδοθήσεται καὶ πεπερασμένων ὄντων, ἐάν τις λάβῃ· τὸ αὐτὸ γὰρ ποιήσει, κἂν δύο ἢ τρία μόνον ᾖ τοιαῦτα, καθάπερ ἐγχειρεῖ καὶ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς. ἐπεὶ γὰρ καὶ ὣς αὐτοῖς συμβαίνει μὴ πάντα ποιεῖν ἐξ ὁμοιομερῶν (πρόσωπον γὰρ οὐκ ἐκ προσώπων ποιοῦσιν, οὐδ' ἄλλο τῶν κατὰ φύσιν ἐσχηματισμένων οὐθέν), φανερὸν ὅτι πολλῷ βέλτιον πεπερασμένας ποιεῖν τὰς ἀρχάς, καὶ ταύτας ὡς ἐλαχίστας πάντων

[1] See Chapter 3 (pp. 67–72) for the reasons for thinking that this Potamo is the same as the Eclectic philosopher.

γε τῶν αὐτῶν μελλόντων δείκνυσθαι, καθάπερ ἀξιοῦσι καὶ οἱ ἐν τοῖς μαθήμασιν· ἀεὶ γὰρ πεπερασμένας λαμβάνουσιν ἀρχὰς ἢ τῷ εἴδει ἢ τῷ ποσῷ.

Moreover, even if the element is conceived in this way it is not necessary to postulate an infinite number. For all the same things will be accounted for even from a finite number, if one opts for them. For the same result will come about, even if there are only two or three such things, as Empedocles too attempts to show. Since even by their account not everything is made up of parts that are like each other and the whole (for they do not claim that a face is made of faces, or any other thing that is shaped according to nature), it is obvious that it is much better to make first principles finite, and try to make them as few as possible as long as all the same things will be demonstrated, just as the mathematicians stipulate; for they always assume principles that are finite, either in kind or in quantity. (Arist. *Cael.* 3.4.302b 20–30)

Aristotle here aims to show that Anaxagoras' infinite elemental entities are superfluous since (i) other accounts can explain the same phenomena more economically, and (ii) there are things that cannot be described on the basis of *homoiomereia* (as Aristotle presents it). There are problems here with Aristotle's equation of the infinite Anaxagorean seeds (σπερμάτων ἀπείρων πλῆθος, Anaxagoras Fr. 4) or homoeomerous entities separated off from the primordial mixture (Frs. 1, 5) on the one hand, and his own non-composite elements on the other.[2] But the reference to Potamo is connected with the separate methodological point that it is more sensible to operate from a finite (and as small as possible) number of principles (ἀρχαί) than an infinite one, if one can account for the same phenomena in both cases, a rationale which takes as its model the practice of mathematicians. Simplicius offers support for this view on the basis of apprehensibility: διότι τὸ μὲν ἄπειρον ἄγνωστόν ἐστι, τὸ δὲ πεπερασμένον γνωστόν, καὶ τοσούτῳ μᾶλλον, ὅσῳ εὐπεριληπτότερόν ἐστι καὶ τῇ μονάδι πλησιάζει ('because the indefinite cannot be known, whereas the finite is knowable, and all the more to the extent that it is easier to comprehend and closer to the unit', *In Cael.* 606.31–3).

[2] This equation may have something to do with examples such as hair and flesh, which seem to have been part of Anaxagoras' discussion of generation (Fr. 10), and are at the same time typical ὁμοιομερῆ in Aristotle's biology. See Schofield 1980: 153 n. 39.

Then it becomes a case of explaining the details of the mathematicians' procedure that Aristotle had in mind in his phrase 'just as the mathematicians stipulate' (in the passage cited above):

διὸ καὶ οἱ μαθηματικοὶ ἐπιστημονικὴν γνῶσιν ἔχειν τῶν ὑποκειμένων βουλόμενοι πεπερασμένας τὰς ἀρχὰς λαμβάνουσιν ἢ τῷ εἴδει ἢ τῷ ποσῷ, τῷ μὲν εἴδει, ὅταν σημεῖον καὶ γραμμὴν καὶ ἐπίπεδον ὁρίζωνται· οὐ γὰρ ἓν ἀριθμῷ τούτων ἕκαστον, ἀλλὰ τῷ εἴδει καὶ τῷ λόγῳ· τῷ δὲ ποσῷ μαθηματικὰς ἀρχὰς ὡρίσθαι ὁ μὲν Ποτάμων λέγει, ὅταν τὴν μονάδα ἀρχὴν ἀριθμοῦ λαμβάνωσιν, Ἀσπάσιος δὲ τῷ ποσῷ ὡρίσθαι τὰ πέντε αἰτήματά φησι· ταῦτα γὰρ οὐ κατ' εἶδος, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἀριθμὸν πέντε ἐστί. δύναται δέ, φησὶν Ἀλέξανδρος, ἀρχὰς τῷ ποσῷ λέγειν πεπερασμένας καὶ αὐτὰς ταύτας, ὧν ἑκάστην κατὰ τὸ εἶδος ὡρισμένην ἐλάμβανον . . .

For this reason the mathematicians who want to gain scientific knowledge of the underlying things assume first principles that are limited either in kind or in quantity; in kind, when they define a point, line and surface. For each of these is one not in terms of number, but in terms of species and definition. And Potamo says that they have determined the mathematical principles in terms of quantity when they take the unit as the starting point for number; but Aspasius says that it is the five postulates that are delimited in terms of quantity; for they are five not in kind but in number. He may mean, Alexander says, that even these very principles are finite in quantity, each one of which was taken to be limited in species . . . (Simp. *In Cael.* 607.1–7)

The use of the word *archai* by Aristotle, followed by talk of demonstration and a parallel from mathematics, brings up the question of the relationship between *archai* (first principles, but also basic propositions used for subsequent demonstrations, as in *APo.* 1.10.76a30–b3) and *stoicheia* (basic constituents), which form the starting point of his discussion at *Cael.* 3.4. Aristotle himself drew attention to the affinity between 'elements' and geometrical and other primary propositions (παραπλησίως καὶ τὰ τῶν διαγραμμάτων στοιχεῖα λέγεται, καὶ ὅλως τὰ τῶν ἀποδείξεων, 'the elements of geometrical proofs, and in general the elements of demonstrations, are spoken of in a similar way', *Metaph.* 5.3.1014a35–6, cf. 3.3.998a 25–6, *Top.* 8.14.163b23–5). He also listed 'element' among the *archai* (*Metaph.* 5.1.1013a20); one or more elements (*stoicheia*) constitute the only kind of principle

admitted by the materialist theories described in the doxography of the first book of the *Metaphysics* (see e.g. 1.3.983b6–13).

While Aristotle's comment in *Cael.* 3.4 is based on the affinity between *archai* and *stoicheia*, the disagreement between Potamo and Aspasius on the mathematical system that Aristotle appealed to seems to reflect the different possible interpretations of the meaning of *archai* in Aristotle's phrase 'to make the *archai* finite' (πεπερασμένας ποιεῖν τὰς ἀρχάς, 302b30). Potamo understood that mathematical principles are limited in quantity because all numbers are in fact derived from a single basic constituent, the unit, which is of course limited. This derivation from the Monad is widely attributed to the Pythagorean tradition, already by Aristotle himself: φαίνονται δὴ καὶ οὗτοι [οἱ καλούμενοι Πυθαγόρειοι, 985b23] τὸν ἀριθμὸν νομίζοντες ἀρχὴν εἶναι . . . τὸν δ' ἀριθμὸν ἐκ τοῦ ἑνός, ἀριθμοὺς δέ, καθάπερ εἴρηται, τὸν ὅλον οὐρανόν ('and the so called Pythagoreans obviously believe that number is a first principle . . . and that number is derived from unity, and numbers, as we have said, compose the entire universe', *Metaph.* 1.5.986a15–21).[3] Aristotle must have had something similar in mind when he referred to those who used *arche* as the genus in their definition of the unit: τήν τε γὰρ μονάδα ἀρχὴν ἀριθμοῦ φασιν εἶναι καὶ τὴν στιγμὴν ἀρχὴν γραμμῆς. δῆλον οὖν ὅτι εἰς τὸ κοινὸν ἀμφοτέρων γένος τιθέασιν ('they declare the unit to be the starting point of number, and the point the starting point of a line. It is clear, then, that they place them in that which is common to both as their genus', *Top.* 1.18.108b28–31).[4]

Rescigno suggests that such parallels within the Aristotelian corpus can help us identify Potamo's methodological principle in interpreting Aristotle's text, namely the presupposition of a basic unity and coherence across the corpus, which enables clarification of one passage on the basis of another. In this case, a passage from the *Topics* appears to throw light on a passage from the *On the Heavens*. Such an approach on Potamo's part, as Rescigno indicates,[5] probably would have recommended him to Alexander as a source (Alexander is

[3] Ross *ad loc.* explains that τὸν δ' ἀριθμὸν ἐκ τοῦ ἑνός is not an accurate report of the Pythagorean origin of number. For more statements of the principle, with more or less clear Pythagorean connections, see Rescigno 2001: 274 n. 31.

[4] 'They' here refers to Speusippus according to Cherniss 1944: 131 with n. 82.

[5] Ἀριστοτέλη ἐξ Ἀριστοτέλους σαφηνίζειν; cf. Rescigno 2001: 274.

explicitly mentioned as Simplicius' source for the material on Potamo at *In Cael.* 652.9, cited below). Potamo, then, sought to clarify the claim that mathematical principles are limited in quantity through a reduction to the single (and thus undeniably limited in quantity) *arche* of the unit, from which all subsequent mathematical entities can be derived. Such an interpretation is closer to one of the guises of *arche*, namely that of elementary constituent,[6] and Potamo is likely to have favoured it because of the context in the relevant *On the Heavens* passage, where the mathematicians' practice is offered as a model for establishing the number of elements in nature.

Aspasius, on the other hand, thought that the mathematical *archai* which are limited and defined in terms of quantity are not the basic constituents (or rather constituent) of number, but the basic propositions from which other proofs can be derived, a meaning of *arche* that was also taken into account by Aristotle, as we saw above. But Aspasius went beyond Aristotle's text in what appears to be a reference to the five postulates that became canonical only with Euclid (p. 8 Heiberg), and it might be anachronistic to claim that this is what Aristotle had in mind when he spoke of 'principles limited in quantity'. There is, however, evidence in his works for the view that postulates (i.e. propositions that must be assumed without proof, even though they are not self-evident) need to be as few as possible if a proof is going to be successful: ἔστω γὰρ αὕτη ἡ ἀπόδειξις βελτίων τῶν ἄλλων τῶν αὐτῶν ὑπαρχόντων, ἡ ἐξ ἐλαττόνων αἰτημάτων ἢ ὑποθέσεων ἢ προτάσεων ('other things being equal, let that proof be the better which proceeds from the fewer postulates or hypotheses or propositions', *APo.* 1.25.86a33–5). In what follows in Simplicius' text, Alexander challenges the initial explanations by Potamo and Aspasius of what it means for mathematical principles to be limited in kind and in quantity, and questions the distinction between the two criteria.

Thus far, then, we have seen Potamo offering an interpretation of Aristotle's reference to the limitation of mathematical principles

[6] Cf. *Metaph.* 5.1.1013a19–20: τούτων δὲ αἱ μὲν ἐνυπάρχουσαί εἰσιν αἱ δὲ ἐκτός. διὸ ἥ τε φύσις ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ στοιχεῖον, 'of these some are internal, others external; this is why both nature and the elementary constituent are *archai*' (these two examples are part of a list that also includes thought, will, essence and final cause).

in terms of quantity which makes use of the idea that number is constituted from the singular element of the Monad. There are many Pythagorean parallels for the Monad as the principle or starting point (ἀρχή) of number, and even though the passage where Potamo is mentioned makes explicit reference to *mathematical* principles,[7] we may detect here a further strand that could have contributed to his thought on principles more generally. The majority of Pythagorean sources speak of the derivation of everything else (including perceptible body) from number, thus making the Monad the ultimate principle. Plato himself is said to have contributed to the development of this theme, having postulated the One and the Dyad (the latter in the role of matter) as principles in his 'unwritten doctrines'.[8] In the first century BC, Alexander Polyhistor interpreted the Monad and the indefinite Dyad in terms of active principle and matter,[9] and Potamo's compatriot Eudorus (above, p. 59) discerned different levels of principles for (i) the One at the highest level and (ii) the pair made up of the Monad and the indefinite Dyad, ranked below the One (Simpl. *In Phys.* 181.10–30).[10] We cannot safely specify to what extent Potamo was influenced by such debates, because our information on his set of principles does not contain any obvious traces of them (see Chapter 4, section II). Still, his familiarity with the Pythagorean principle of the Monad offers an additional glimpse into the range of material that formed the background to his eclectic project.

Finally, from this initial reference in Simplicius' commentary on *On the Heavens*, it appears that the material cited from Potamo was part of some sort of engagement with and exegesis of the Aristotelian text, because it is in direct reference to issues arising there (in this case, the sense in which mathematical principles are limited in quantity). It is also more likely that Alexander or Simplicius would have consulted

7 'Potamo says that mathematical principles are limited in terms of quantity when they take the unit as the starting point for number', *In Cael.* 607.4–5, cited above.

8 See e.g. Aristotle, *Metaph.* 1.6.987b20–7, 988a7–15; Simp. *In Ph.* 22–3 (with reference to the lecture 'On the Good').

9 ἀρχὴν μὲν τῶν ἁπάντων μονάδα. ἐκ δὲ τῆς μονάδος ἀόριστον δυάδα ὡς ἂν ὕλην τῇ μονάδι αἰτίῳ ὄντι ὑποστῆναι ('the principle of all things in the Monad; and out of this Monad the indefinite Dyad is the substrate as matter for the Monad which is the cause', D.L. 8.25).

10 On this text see Bonazzi 2007b: 367–73.

a work directly related to their topic rather than something more general by a virtually unknown Eclectic philosopher. We cannot be certain, however, whether there was a full running commentary, due to the small number of available references. A possible topic for Potamo's work, if it was a treatment of particular issues arising from Aristotle's text, could be some sort of study on the basic constituents of matter as discussed by Aristotle in *On the Heavens* 3 (elements or particles and their characteristics). This would provide Potamo with the opportunity to consider both their number (which, if limited, is comparable to the practices involving mathematical principles) and their shape, as we shall see in a moment.

GEOMETRICAL SHAPES COMPLETING THE SPACE AROUND A POINT

The second reference to Potamo in Simplicius' commentary occurs in the discussion of the passage from *On the Heavens* 3 where Aristotle examines and denies the possibility of attributing regular geometrical shapes to the elements. These arguments are attached to Aristotle's criticism of earlier theories on the manner of generation of the elements. His main target is Plato's theory of generation from planes (triangles), as expounded in the *Timaeus* (53a–61c), a theory which is blamed in a polemical passage for blindly insisting on mathematical principles that do not belong in physics.[11]

Plato denied that the four primary bodies (fire, air, water, earth) can be truly called 'elements' because they are themselves analysed into even more basic entities (*Tim.* 48b6–c2). At 53c4–d5 he goes on to argue that since fire, air etc. are bodies, they have depth, and depth is bounded by surfaces; and since all surfaces bounded by straight lines can be analysed into triangles (the triangle being the surface contained by the minimum number of straight lines), it follows that at the most fundamental level the basic unit for the formation of bodies is some kind of triangle. Furthermore, since each triangle is itself composed of two right-angled triangles, either isosceles or scalene (if one drops a perpendicular from any angle to the opposite side), it turns out that the ultimate constituents of body

[11] *Cael.* 3.7.306a3–18; cf. *GC* 1.2.315b30–2. See also Solmsen 1960: 259–60.

are for Plato (i) the right-angled isosceles triangle and (ii) the scalene right-angled triangle with the proportions $1{:}\sqrt{3}{:}2$, in other words the 'half-equilateral' (53c6–54b5). The reason for choosing this particular triangle among the infinite kinds of scalene right-angled triangles is that it is 'the best' (κάλλιστον), and when duplicated it produces an equilateral triangle.

The usefulness of these particular shapes becomes evident when Plato proceeds to the construction of the solid bodies attributed to fire, air, water and earth. The first three are identified with the regular tetrahedron, octahedron and icosahedron respectively, all solids whose faces are equilateral triangles, made up, according to Timaeus, of six half-equilaterals. Earth, on the other hand, corresponds to the cube, whose sides (six squares) are composed of four isosceles right-angled triangles each.[12] The implication of all this is that the first three bodies can transform into one another through disassembly and rearrangement of their constitutive triangles, while earth cannot be part of such processes because it is made up of a different kind of triangle.[13] This theory on the shapes of primary bodies was arguably influenced by developments in mathematics in Athens, where Theaetetus had successfully constructed the five regular solids. Scholars have pointed out that Plato was a priori determined to use these shapes, and this is why he felt the need to find a place for the fifth regular solid, the dodecahedron, which he assigns to the entire universe (τὸ πᾶν, *Tim.* 55c4–6).[14]

Aristotle's criticism in the passage for which Simplicius quoted Potamo is directed generally against the idea of ascribing different geometric shapes to each of the four elements. This criticism applies to the atomists too, but the *Timaeus* becomes a particular target through Aristotle's focus on regular shapes, as well as on the idea that the truly primary entities are plane surfaces. In Aristotle's opinion, primary bodies are perfectly continuous and homogeneous, differing only in virtue of their perceivable properties, notably motion. He

[12] Cornford 1937: 217 questioned this kind of seemingly overcomplicated construction (since, for example, an equilateral can be more easily constructed from two half-equilaterals), and suggested (234) that it is related to different size requirements ('grades'). But see Lloyd 2006, esp. 460–4 and 469–70 for the superior symmetry of Timaeus' construction.

[13] When earth particles are dissolved they can only reform further earth particles (*Tim.* 56d1–6).

[14] See Cornford 1937: 210–11, 213, 216; Zeyl 2000: lxix.

points out that trying to attribute determinate configurations to them leads to severe difficulties such as, in the case of the passage where Potamo is implicated, committing one to the acceptance of void (for the other difficulties see *Cael.* 3.8.306b9–307b24).

The variation of the primary bodies in shape and the postulation of these particular regular shapes by Plato mean, according to Aristotle, that they will never be able to fit completely next to each other, thus leaving void interstices. This could be a problem for Plato who, unlike the Atomists, had denied the existence of void (κενὴν χώραν οὐδεμίαν ἐᾷ λείπεσθαι, 'it does not allow any empty space to be left over', *Tim.* 58a7; cf. 60c, 80c). But he had also spoken of a process of 'squeezing', whereby smaller bodies would be pushed into the gaps left between the larger ones, thus filling them up (*Tim.* 58b). But Aristotle feels entitled to push the geometrical details of the matter, particularly since Plato does not prove that larger 'interstices' (διάκενα) can be filled in their entirety by smaller bodies, nor does he explain what happens with the 'smallest void' (ἐλαχίστην κενότητα, *Tim.* 58b3–4) between the smallest bodies. On the other hand, Plato allows for different shapes and sizes placed side by side (58a5–c4),[15] whereas Aristotle's argument requires identical regular shapes to complete the space about a point if they are to be attributed to simple bodies:

ὅλως δὲ τὸ πειρᾶσθαι τὰ ἁπλᾶ σώματα σχηματίζειν ἄλογόν ἐστι, πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι συμβήσεται μὴ ἀναπληροῦσθαι τὸ ὅλον· ἐν μὲν γὰρ τοῖς ἐπιπέδοις τρία σχήματα δοκεῖ συμπληροῦν τὸν τόπον, τρίγωνον καὶ τετράγωνον καὶ ἑξάγωνον, ἐν δὲ τοῖς στερεοῖς δύο μόνον, πυραμὶς καὶ κύβος· ἀνάγκη δὲ πλείω τούτων λαμβάνειν διὰ τὸ πλείω τὰ στοιχεῖα ποιεῖν.

On the whole there is no logic in trying to attribute a shape to simple bodies, firstly because it will result in the whole not being filled. For among plane figures there are only three which are agreed to fill the space, namely the triangle, the square and the hexagon; and among solids only two, the pyramid and the cube. But this theory would need to admit more than these because it makes the number of elements higher. (Arist. *Cael.* 3.8.306b3–9)

[15] This is the point made by Proclus in his defence of Plato against these arguments (Simp. *In Cael.* 656.6–13). This reference most probably comes from Proclus' work dedicated to the refutation of Aristotle's censures against the elements of the *Timaeus* (βιβλίον ἔγραψε τὰς ἐνταῦθα τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους ἐνστάσεις διαλύον, mentioned at 640.21–6).

The references to Potamo come from the section of Simplicius' commentary where it is explained exactly how the shapes mentioned above 'fill the space'; one would need to show that such shapes when placed around a given point fit perfectly next to each other around 360°, leaving no void. In the case of plane figures, after presenting a theoretical proof based on what is known about the sums of figures' angles, Simplicius cites Potamo for further proofs based on graphic illustrations:

καὶ ὅ γε Ποτάμων, ὡς Ἀλέξανδρος ἱστορεῖ, διὰ συντόμου τὰς τῶν εἰρημένων σχημάτων συμπληρώσεις ἐπὶ καταγραφῆς παραδέδωκεν. (652.10)

'ἔστω γάρ', φησίν, 'ἰσόπλευρον τρίγωνον, καὶ ἐκβεβλήσθωσαν αὐτοῦ δύο πλευραὶ ἐπ' εὐθείας αἱ τὴν αὐτὴν γωνίαν ποιοῦσαι κατὰ τοῦτο, καθ' ὃ συννεύουσιν ἀλλήλαις, καὶ κατὰ τὴν διχοτομίαν, καθ' ἣν τέμνουσιν ἀλλήλας αἱ δύο αἱ ἐκβληθεῖσαι, ἤχθω τις εὐθεῖα μὴ τέμνουσα τὴν τοῦ τριγώνου γωνίαν μηδὲ τὴν κατὰ κορυφὴν ταύτης ἀλλὰ τὰς λοιπὰς δίχα· (652.15) ἔσονται δὴ περὶ τὴν διχοτομίαν τῶν ἐκβληθεισῶν πλευρῶν γωνίαι ἓξ ἴσαι ἀλλήλαις. ἀλλ' ἦν ἡ τοῦ τριγώνου διμοίρου· αἱ ἄρα ἕξ, ἐπεὶ ἴσαι ἀλλήλαις εἰσί, τεττάρων ὀρθῶν ἔσονται· ἐκπληροῦται ἄρα ὑπὸ τῶν τριγώνων ὁ τόπος. ἐὰν γὰρ ἀπολαβόντες ἀφ' ἑκάστης τῶν ἐκβεβλημένων εὐθειῶν ἴσα ταῖς ἐξ ἀρχῆς εὐθείαις ἐπιζεύξωμεν εἰς τὸ κύκλῳ εὐθείας, (652.20) ἔσται συγκείμενα τρίγωνα ἕξ, καὶ κενὸς τόπος οὐδείς.

ἔστω πάλιν τετράγωνον, καὶ ἐκβεβλήσθωσαν ὁμοίως ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, καθ' ὃ συννεύουσιν ἀλλήλαις, δύο πλευραὶ αὐτοῦ τῶν τὴν αὐτὴν γωνίαν περιεχουσῶν· (653.1) ἔσονται δὴ αἱ περὶ τὴν κοινὴν τομὴν τῶν ἐκβληθεισῶν ἴσαι ἀλλήλαις καὶ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τέτταρες. ἔστι δὲ ἡ τοῦ τετραγώνου ὀρθή· αἱ ἄρα τέτταρες ἔσονται τέτταρες ὀρθαί· οὐδεὶς ἄρα ἀπολειφθήσεται κενὸς τόπος. καὶ ἐὰν ἀπολαβόντες ἀφ' ἑκατέρας τῶν ἐκβληθεισῶν εὐθειῶν ἴσην τῇ τοῦ τετραγώνου πλευρᾷ προσαναγράψωμεν τὸν γνώμονα, (653.5) ἔσται τέτταρα τετράγωνα ἐκπληροῦντα τὸν τόπον, ὥσπερ τὰ ἓξ τρίγωνα ἐγίνετο.'

τὸ δὲ ἑξάγωνον ὁ Ποτάμων κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔφοδον καταγράψας ἀποδίδωσι τὸ ζητούμενον, προστίθημι δὲ ἐγὼ στοιχεῖα, ἵνα σαφηνίσω τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι τὸ λεγόμενον.

'ἔστω γάρ', φησί, 'πάλιν ἑξαγώνου γωνία ἡ Α, καὶ ἐκβεβλήσθωσαν (653.10) αὐτοῦ δύο πλευραὶ αἱ περὶ τὴν αὐτὴν γωνίαν τὴν Α, καθ' ἃ συννεύουσι πρὸς ἀλλήλας, ἡ ΒΑΓ καὶ ἡ ΔΑΕ, καὶ δίχα τετμήσθω ἡ τοῦ ἑξαγώνου ἡ Α καὶ ἡ κατὰ κορυφὴν αὐτῇ γεγονυῖα ὑπὸ τῶν ἐκβληθεισῶν τῇ ΖΗ εὐθείᾳ· ἔσονται δὴ περὶ τὸ κατὰ τὴν διχοτομίαν σημεῖον γωνίαι ἓξ ἴσαι ἀλλήλαις, ὧν ἑκάστη ἡμίσεια ἔσται τῆς τοῦ ἑξαγώνου γωνίας· (653.15) καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἡ ΕΑΒ καὶ ἡ ΓΑΔ διμοίρου ὀρθῆς ἐστιν ἑκατέρα·

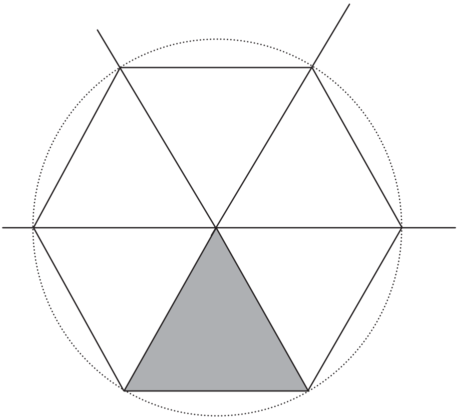

Fig. 1 Equilateral triangles filling the space around a point

(654.1) εἰσὶ γὰρ αἱ λείπουσαι εἰς τὰς δύο ὀρθὰς μετὰ τὴν τοῦ ἑξαγώνου γωνίαν, ἥ δέ γε τοῦ ἑξαγώνου γωνία ἐστὶ μιᾶς ὀρθῆς καὶ τρίτου· αἱ γὰρ ἓξ αὐτοῦ γωνίαι ὀκτὼ ὀρθαῖς ἴσαι εἰσίν. εἰ οὖν ἑκάστη τῶν περὶ τὸ Α ὀκτὼ[16] γωνιῶν διμοίρου ἐστὶν ὀρθῆς, αἱ ὀκτὼ τέτρασιν ὀρθαῖς ἴσαι εἰσίν· ἀναπληροῦσιν ἄρα (654.5) τὸν περὶ τὸ Α τόπον, καὶ οὔτε ἐλλείπει τι οὔτε πλεονάζει. ἐὰν οὖν ἀπὸ τῶν τριῶν γωνιῶν τῶν περὶ τὸ Α τῆς τε ΖΑΒ καὶ τῆς ΒΑΔ καὶ τῆς ΔΑΖ, ὧν ἑκάστη ἑξαγώνου ἐστί, καί εἰσιν αἱ τρεῖς τέτρασιν ὀρθαῖς ἴσαι, γράψωμεν ἑξάγωνα τὰ ΑΖΘΚΛΒ, ΑΒΜΝΞΔ, ΑΔΟΠΡΖ, ἔσται τρία ἑξάγωνα ἀναπληροῦντα τὸν περὶ τὸ Α τόπον καὶ οὔτε κενὸν ἀπολείποντά τι (654.10) οὔτε ὑπερβάλλοντα.'

οὕτω μὲν καὶ τὰ ἑξάγωνα ὁ Ποτάμων ἐμμεθόδως ἀνέγραψε, κατ' ἄλλον δὲ τρόπον καταγραφῆς οὕτως ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος ἐκτίθεται.

And Potamo, as Alexander reports, has preserved a brief account of how the shapes mentioned above fill the space using diagrams. (652.10)

'For let us then', he says, 'take an equilateral triangle, and let us extend in straight lines two of its sides that form the same angle in the direction of their convergence [Fig. 1]; and at the point of bisection, where the two extended lines join, let us draw a straight line that does not divide the angle of the triangle or its vertical, but divides each of the remaining angles into two [equal parts]. (652.15) There will be, then, around the bisection of the extended sides six angles equal to one another. But the angle

[16] ὀκτώ cannot be the correct reading here or in the next line (Heiberg *in app.*: 'immo ἕξ'). The mistake may be a repetition from ὀκτὼ ὀρθαῖς a few words earlier.

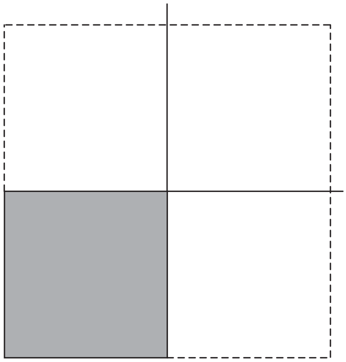

Fig. 2 Squares filling the space around a point

of our triangle measured two thirds [of a right angle]; therefore, six of them, since they are all equal to one another, will measure four right angles [360°]. Therefore the space is filled by the triangles. For if we take segments on each of the extended lines equal to our initial lines [i.e. the sides of the triangle] and we join these with further lines following the points of intersection around a circle, (652.20) there will be six triangles next to each other, and no empty space.

Let us, again, take a square, and let us similarly extend two of its sides that contain the same angle in the direction of their convergence [Fig. 2]. (653.1) There will then be equal angles around the common point of the extended lines, and they will be four in total. But the angle of the square is a right angle; there will therefore be four right angles, which means that no space will be left empty. And if we take on each of the extended straight lines segments equal to the side of the square and we add the gnomon, (653.5) there will be four squares filling the space, just as was the case with the six triangles.'

Potamo demonstrates the required point for the hexagon by using diagrams in the same way, but I will add letters in order to make his argument clearer to readers.

'Let us consider', he says, 'an angle A of a hexagon, and let us extend (653.10) its two sides that form this angle A in the direction of their convergence [Fig. 3]; let us name the resulting lines ΒΑΓ and ΔΑΕ. Now let us draw the bisector of the angle A of the hexagon and of its vertical, which was formed by the extension of the lines, and let us call this bisector ΖΗ. There will thus be six angles equal to one another around the point of bisection, and each one will be equal to half of the hexagon's angle. (653.15) Moreover, each one of the ΕΑΒ and ΓΑΔ angles is equal to two thirds of a

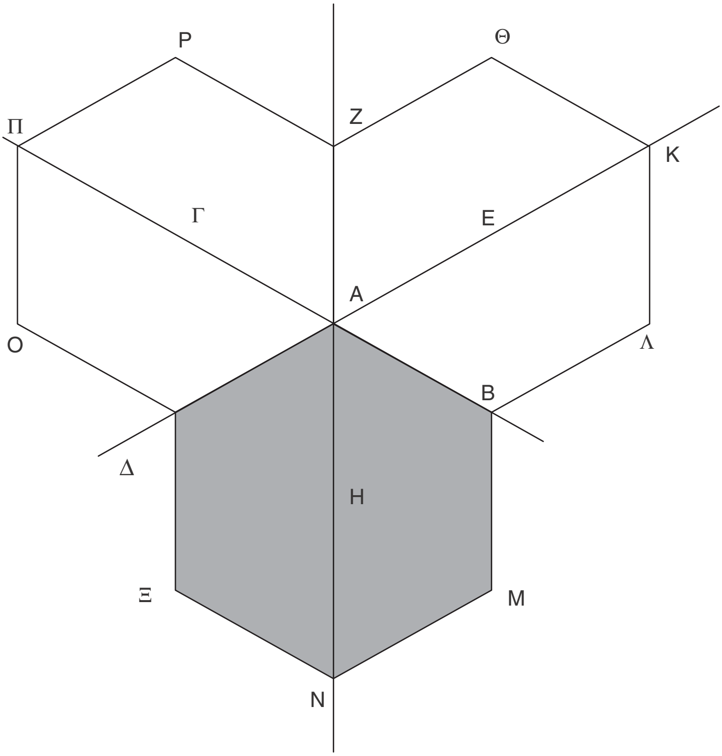

Fig. 3 Regular hexagons filling the space around a point

right angle; (654.1) for they are supplementary to the angle of the hexagon, and this one measures one right angle plus one third, because its six angles are equal to eight right angles. If, then, each one of the six angles around A is equal to two thirds of a right angle, all six of them are equal to four right angles. Therefore they fill the space (654.5) around A and there is nothing falling short or in excess. Now, if from the three angles around A, ΖΑΒ, ΒΑΔ and ΔΑΖ (they are all hexagon angles and the three of them together are equal to four right angles) we draw the hexagons ΑΖΘΚΛΒ, ΑΒΜΝΞΔ and ΑΔΟΠΡΖ, we will have three hexagons filling the space around point Α, without any void left (654.10) or any surplus.

Thus Potamo systematically described the hexagons too, but Alexander expounds the matter following an alternative type of diagram, as follows . . . (Simp. *In Cael.* 652.9–654.14)

In this passage Potamo offers a technical geometrical proof for the claim that six equilateral triangles, four squares or three hexagons can fill up the whole space on a surface surrounding one point. Aristotle's point rests on the fact that they are the only regular shapes with this characteristic, but it is not clear how this is meant to strengthen his argument against the Platonic solids. Perhaps it was intended to discredit the fundamental triangles (which are plane figures), or we should take it as a preamble building up to the argument about solids (see below). Potamo does not dwell on the fact that these three figures are the *only* ones completing the space.[17] In fact this follows from the observation that all the angles about a point add up to the equivalent of four right angles (αἱ πρὸς τῷ σημείῳ γωνίαι πᾶσαι τέτρασιν ὀρθαῖς ἴσαι εἰσί, 651.9–10),[18] combined with the fact that the three shapes in question are the only ones whose individual angle is an exact submultiple of the four right angles. Expressed in modern terms, this would give: $6 \times 60^\circ$ (equilateral triangle) $= 4 \times 90^\circ$ (square) $= 3 \times 120^\circ$ (regular hexagon) $= 360^\circ$.

Potamo's particular contribution, according to Simplicius, is that he demonstrated all this visually with the aid of diagrams. But it appears that he did not accompany these drawings with letters distinguishing the different points or lines, and Simplicius had to supply them in the case of the more complex hexagon diagram. In any case, it would not have been uncommon for a philosopher to practise such hands-on geometrical analysis and, as Simplicius informs us, Alexander also produced his own alternative diagrams. This type of testimony is particularly important in Potamo's case because of the additional information it provides on the range of his interests and areas of expertise.

A more general question arises as to the origin of this theory of 'filling the space' because it is not commonly found in Greek mathematical texts, even though Aristotle appears to take it for

[17] It is emphasised in the passage that Simplicius reports as Alexander's own contribution, 655.2–8.

[18] Simplicius cites here as evidence Propositions 13 and 15 from the first book of Euclid's *Elements*, which state that 'if a straight line set up on a straight line makes angles, it will make either two right angles or angles equal to two right angles' and 'if two straight lines cut one another, they make the vertical angles equal to one another' (transl. Heath); cf. Simp. *In Cael.* 651.10–14.

granted. There is one parallel for Potamo's proof in Proclus' commentary on the first book of Euclid's *Elements*, where it is directly linked to the probably spurious porism ('corollary') from Euclid's Proposition 1.15.[19] The porism states that 'if two straight lines cut one another, they will make the angles converging on the section equal to four right angles' (ἐὰν δύο εὐθεῖαι τέμνωσιν ἀλλήλας, τὰς πρὸς τῇ τομῇ γωνίας τέτρασιν ὀρθαῖς ἴσας ποιήσουσιν). Proclus comments:

τοῦτο δὲ τὸ πόρισμα, περὶ οὗ πρόκειται λέγειν, διδάσκον ἡμᾶς ὅτι ὁ περὶ ἓν σημεῖον τόπος εἰς τέτρασιν ὀρθαῖς ἴσας γωνίας διανέμεται, παρέσχεν ἀφορμὴν κἀκείνῳ τῷ παραδόξῳ θεωρήματι τῷ δεικνύντι μόνα τρία ταῦτα πολύγωνα πληροῦν δυνάμενα τὸν περὶ ἓν σημεῖον ὅλον τόπον, τὸ ἰσόπλευρον τρίγωνον καὶ τὸ τετράγωνον καὶ τὸ ἑξάγωνον τὸ ἰσόπλευρον καὶ ἰσογώνιον.

The porism we are now discussing, in teaching us that the space about a single point can be divided into angles equal to four right angles, forms the basis of that paradoxical theorem which proves that only the following three polygons can fill up the whole space about a single point: the equilateral triangle, the square, and the equilateral and equiangular hexagon. (Procl. *In Euc* 304.11–17 Friedlein; transl. Morrow)

The rest of Proclus' argument (304.17–305.3) is closer to the theoretical proof based on calculation from the sums of the polygons' angles that Simplicius used before turning to Potamo, rather than to Potamo's method using diagrams (καταγραφή). Proclus characterises the theorem as paradoxical (where the paradox probably lies in the fact that only three regular polygons fit exactly around 360°), but also offers a crucial piece of information as to its origin: καί ἐστι τὸ θεώρημα τοῦτο Πυθαγόρειον ('and this theorem is Pythagorean', 305.3). The precise origin of the theorem within the Pythagorean tradition cannot be determined with any certainty,[20] though Aristotle's confidence in asserting it at *Cael.* 3.8.306b3–9 (cited above) may offer a possible *terminus ante quem*. Heath finds further support for the Pythagorean origin of the theorem proved visually by Potamo in the fact that it is an obvious deduction from the following

[19] This porism has been suspected by editors because of inadequate manuscript support.
[20] Cf. Burkert 1972: 451: 'The chronology of these Pythagoreans is not guaranteed by any external testimony.'

three Pythagorean theorems: '[i] the three right angles of a triangle are together equal to two right angles; [ii] all the angles that can be drawn in a plane round a point make up four right angles; [iii] the sum of all the interior angles of any polygon together with four right angles make up twice as many right angles as the figure has sides'. He also points out that the ideal tile shapes for laying a floor without leaving gaps must have been known empirically e.g. to the ancient Egyptians before the fact was proved geometrically.[21]

As far as Pythagorean geometry in general is concerned, we cannot identify a dominant theoretical background equivalent to the Pythagorean theory of number.[22] There is, however, a set of propositions and discoveries related to the calculation of the sum of the angles of a triangle, including the contents of the fourth book of Euclid's *Elements*, which is attributed by the scholia on Euclid to Pythagorean sources. These scholia include comments such as 'all the theorems contained in this book, seventeen in total, are the findings of the Pythagoreans'.[23] One can therefore connect the theorem utilised by Aristotle and analysed by Potamo with the same Pythagorean background detected in *Elements* 4. Admittedly the particular 'paradoxical theorem' (according to Proclus, cited above) is not mentioned in Euclid, but *Elements* 4 is the book dealing with the construction of regular polygons, and our theorem concerns a particular application of these figures.

SOLID FIGURES FILLING UP THREE-DIMENSIONAL SPACE

But Aristotle's argument goes beyond regular polygons and makes an additional claim about filling the space around a point for solids: ἐν δὲ τοῖς στερεοῖς δύο μόνον, πυραμὶς καὶ κύβος ('and in the case of solids only two, the pyramid and the cube', *Cael.* 3.8.306b7–8, cited above p. 148). It is possible that this was also accepted knowledge at his time (cf. the verb δοκεῖ, 'are agreed to', at 306b5, which governs this phrase

21 Heath 1949: 177–8.

22 Burkert 1972: 451 sees the contribution of Pythagoreans to the field as equivalent to that of other individual mathematicians.

23 τὰ ὅλα δὲ θεωρήματα τοῦ προκειμένου βιβλίου ιζ′ ὄντα Πυθαγορείων εὑρήματα (Book 4, schol. 4 Stamatis); cf. εὕρημα δὲ τοῦτο τὸ βιβλίον τῶν Πυθαγορείων, (schol. 2). See Burkert 1972: 450.

too). It may have formed part of the same Pythagorean background as the theorem about regular polygons because, according to Burkert, the construction of regular polyhedra follows naturally from the exhaustion of the plane by the figures discussed above.[24] Our other sources, however, do not mention anything specific about regular polyhedra filling up the space about a point, and the discussion that follows in Simplicius presents a number of problems:

. . . ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν στερεῶν, ὅτι μὲν ὁ κύβος ἐκπληροῖ τὸν τόπον, τί δεῖ καὶ λέγειν; ἐὰν γάρ τις κατὰ τὰς πλευρὰς παραβάλλῃ τέσσαρας κύβους, (655.10) ἐκπληρώσει τὸν τόπον. ἄλλως τε, ὃν ἔχει λόγον ἐν ἐπιπέδοις τὸ τετράγωνον, τοῦτον ἔχει τὸν λόγον ἐν στερεοῖς ὁ κύβος· ἐξεπλήρου δὲ τὸν τόπον ἐν τοῖς ἐπιπέδοις τὸ τετράγωνον· καὶ ὁ κύβος ἄρα ἐν τοῖς στερεοῖς πληρώσει τὸν τόπον. ὄψει δὲ ἐναργῶς, ἐὰν ἀπὸ τῶν τεσσάρων τετραγώνων τῶν πρὸς ἑνὶ σημείῳ συνεστηκότων κύβους ἀναστήσῃς βάσεις ἔχοντας τὰ τετράγωνα· (655.15) ἀντὶ γὰρ τοῦ σημείου ἐκείνου γενήσεται ἡ ἐπὶ τὸ σημεῖον κάθετος ἀγομένη εὐθεῖα, πρὸς ἣν συνάψουσιν ἀλλήλοις οἱ τέσσαρες κύβοι τὸν στερεὸν τόπον συμπληροῦντες. ὅτι δὲ καὶ ἡ πυραμίς, δῆλον· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἡ πυραμὶς ἢ κύβου γωνία· ἐπεὶ οὖν αἱ τοῦ κύβου γωνίαι ἀνεπλήρουν τὸν τόπον, καὶ ἡ πυραμὶς ἀναπληρώσει. ἄλλως τε ὁ κύβος (655.20) αὐτὸς ἐκ δυοῖν πυραμίδων συμπεπλήρωται· ἐὰν ἄρα ὀκτὼ πυραμίδες συντεθῶσι τὰς κορυφὰς ἔχουσαι πρὸς τῷ κέντρῳ τῆς σφαίρας, ἐκπληρώσουσι τὸν τόπον. ἔτι ὃν λόγον ἔχει τὸ τρίγωνον ἐν τοῖς ἐπιπέδοις, τοῦτον ἔχει τὸν λόγον ἐν τοῖς στερεοῖς ἡ πυραμίς· τὸ δὲ τρίγωνον ἐν ἐπιπέδοις ἐκπληροῖ τὸν τόπον· καὶ ἡ πυραμὶς ἄρα ἐν στερεοῖς. καὶ δι' αὐτῆς', φησί, '(655.25) τῆς αἰσθήσεως φανερόν. εἰ γάρ τις πυραμίδας συνθείη ὀκτὼ τὰς κορυφὰς αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλας νευούσας ποιῶν ὡς σφῆνας, οὐκ ἀπολείψει κενὸν τόπον.

ταῦτα καὶ περὶ τῶν στερεῶν ἱστορεῖται τοῦ Ποτάμωνος ἐνστάσεις, οἶμαι, τινὰς ἔχοντα [ἔχοντα E^{2}Fb : ἔχοντας A : ἔχοντος DEc]. ὁ δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος 'οὐδὲν δὲ ἄλλο, φησίν, ἢ τὸ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπιπέδων γινόμενον τοῦτο καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν στερεῶν γίνεται κατὰ τὰς (655.30) τρεῖς διαστάσεις ὁμοίως ὡς ἐπ' ἐκείνων κατὰ τὴν μίαν'. καὶ τοῦτο αἰνίγματί μοι μᾶλλον ἐοικέναι δοκεῖ· (656.1) πῶς γὰρ τῶν ἐπιπέδων κατὰ γραμμὴν συνταττομένων (αὕτη γάρ, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐστιν ἡ μία διάστασις) τὰ στερεὰ κατὰ τὰς τρεῖς συνταχθήσεται, εἴπερ κατὰ τὰ ἐπίπεδα ἀλλήλοις συνήρμοσται; φιλόκαλον δέ ἐστιν, ὥσπερ τῶν ἐπιπέδων, οὕτω καὶ τῶν στερεῶν ἐμμέθοδον ποιήσασθαι τὴν συναρμογήν.

24 Burkert 1972: 450 with n. 16.

. . . As far as solids are concerned, the fact that the cube fills the space does not even need discussing. For if we place four cubes together joining along their sides (655.10) we will fill up the space. Moreover, as the cube is to solids, the square is to surfaces; and the square filled up the space in terms of plane figures; therefore, the cube will also complete the space as far as solids are concerned. You can see this vividly if you set up cubes from the four squares that converge on one point with these squares as their bases. (655.15) Instead of this point, the straight line perpendicular to the surface and running through this point will be where the four cubes converge to fill up the three-dimensional space. That the pyramid is such a shape too is obvious: for the pyramid is nothing other than the corner (angular part) of a cube. Since, then, the corners of the cube completed the space the pyramid will do so too. In any case the cube (655.20) itself is completed from two pyramids; if then eight pyramids are put together with their peaks towards the centre of [a hypothetical] sphere, they will fill the space. Moreover, as the pyramid is to solids, the triangle is to surfaces; and the triangle completed the space in terms of plane figures; therefore, the pyramid [will do the same] as far as solids are concerned. This is also obvious', he says, '(655.25) from the evidence of the senses themselves. For if someone were to put together eight pyramids with their peaks pointing towards each other making them like wedges, there will be no empty space left.'

These views of Potamo's are reported also about solids, but there are, I think, some difficulties. [*Or*: These views are reported about solids too, though Potamo, I believe, had some objections]. And Alexander says: 'It is nothing other than what we saw in the case of plane figures, and it applies in the same way for solids in (655.30) three dimensions as it did for plane figures in one dimension.' And this seems to me more like a riddle; (656.1) for how is it possible, while planes are joined together along a line (for this, as it seems, is the one dimension), that solids may be joined across three dimensions, since they fit together by attaching [only] surfaces? The mathematically sound/elegant approach is, just as in the case of plane figures, to produce a systematic account of the combination of solids. (Simp. *In Cael.* 655.9–656.5)

First of all, it is not clear how much of this text should be attributed to Potamo: the word order of the phrase ταῦτα καὶ περὶ τῶν στερεῶν ἱστορεῖται τοῦ Ποτάμωνος (655.28) is most unusual if τοῦ Ποτάμωνος is to be taken with ταῦτα in the sense of 'these things [i.e. these views] of Potamo's'. On the other hand, the expression ἔνστασιν/ἐνστάσεις ἔχειν is compatible with such a reading, because it can take a concept or proposition/clause expressing a certain view as its subject. In such cases it means 'to contain difficulties', 'to invite objections', and there are a number of parallels in Simplicius

(*In Cael.* 392.12–13; *In Ph.* 770.14–15, 950.9–12) and Alexander (*In Top.* 213.6–7). A construal of the genitive τοῦ Ποτάμωνος with τῶν στερεῶν is also possible and perhaps grammatically more plausible, but it is hard to see how the cube and the pyramid could be known as 'Potamo's solids', particularly in a Platonist context.[25]

A more promising alternative reading, which has some manuscript support (see 655.28), is the genitive absolute construction τοῦ Ποτάμωνος ἐνστάσεις, οἶμαι, τινὰς ἔχοντος ('though Potamo, I believe, had some objections'). In this case, the 'proof' about the regular solids could be a continuation of the quotation from Alexander, since it follows directly from his alternative diagram formulation and discussion of the regular polygons (654.14–655.8).[26] It is not chronologically possible that Potamo objected to Alexander's own views, but 655.9–27 could be part of a series of responses to Aristotle's claim, which Simplicius found in Alexander's commentary alongside the reference to Potamo (compare ἱστορεῖται, 'it is reported' here, to Ἀλέξανδρος ἱστορεῖ, 'Alexander reports', at 652.9.[27] From what follows at 655.29–31, it is clear that Alexander defended a view very close to the one described before the reference to Potamo. It is possible that he was very brief or vague in his report on Potamo, because Simplicius is not well informed on our philosopher's views ('Potamo, *I believe*, had some objections'). He still feels the need to mention him, however, probably because he was a principal source for the parallel proof concerning regular polygons. The objections could have been targeted directly at Aristotle's claim about solids filling up three-dimensional space or at the particular analysis presented at 655.9–27 if indeed the latter extract is a report of an early exegetical attempt.

It is not surprising that this passage may have been the target of criticism, because it contains several weaknesses.[28] First of all, the

[25] Taking this problematic phrase with the first-person οἶμαι to be Simplicius' own words, since Alexander is named immediately afterwards. Mueller 2009: 46 translates: 'This is what Potamon says about the solids, as reported <by Alexander>. I think it raises certain objections.'

[26] Alexander would then be the subject of φησί at 655.25. Mueller 2009: 155 n. 92 expresses uncertainty as to whether 655.2–8 come from Potamo, Alexander or Simplicius himself.

[27] Rescigno 2001: 280–1 also considers these problems, concluding in favour of the rendering 'queste [considerazioni] di Potamone'.

[28] In what follows I am indebted to Bob Lloyd who *per litteras* provided substantial help towards clarifying what sort of solids are under discussion here. I remain solely responsible for any residual errors. See also Mueller 2009: 133–5.

proof concerning cubes speaks about completing the space not about a point but about a straight line, whereas it could have been claimed that eight cubes fill up the three-dimensional space around a given point. In the case of the pyramids, the discussion refers again to the centre as a single point (the centre of a hypothetical sphere). Secondly, there are some dubious claims to the effect that what applies to regular polygons will apply by analogy to the equivalent solids. But it does not follow from the fact that the equilateral triangle is capable of completing the space on a plane that the regular pyramid (tetrahedron) will do the same in three dimensions.

The most important problem, which can also be raised against the original claim in Aristotle's text, concerns the nature of the pyramid under consideration. If Aristotle has in mind the regular tetrahedron of the *Timaeus* he is simply wrong, because it cannot fill up three-dimensional space about a point (or a line, for that matter). It is somewhat surprising that he should make this mistake because it would have been in the interests of his argument to exclude as many as possible of Plato's solids from completing the space. It is possible that he was thinking of a different type of pyramid, which would however make this particular remark irrelevant to the *Timaeus*. He may also have thought of six tetrahedra placed around a common point as vertex, whose faces complete the space on a plane and not in three dimensions. Heath considered this possibility, which would require us not to take literally Aristotle's claim about pyramids filling up space, but concluded that 'it seems better to suppose that Aristotle simply made a slip'.[29]

The discussion in Simplicius that precedes the reference to Potamo is an attempt to 'rescue' Aristotle's claim without any explicit commitment as to the nature of the pyramid in question. The reasons for thinking that both Aristotle and Simplicius' source here are erroneously referring to the tetrahedron are (i) that the entire discussion on filling up the space has focused on regular shapes (the three regular polygons and the cube) and (ii) that Plato had attributed regular polyhedra to the four elements. But the arguments preserved by Simplicius for the 'pyramid' are based on solids with different characteristics from the tetrahedron. It is claimed that this pyramid is 'nothing other than the corner of a cube' (653.18–19). This type of

[29] Heath 1949: 178. Aristotle's claim is not questioned by Taylor 1928: 399, 405.

solid, however, is not a tetrahedron but takes a series of other shapes depending on the position at which the cube is sliced.

One particular slicing[30] may generate a four-sided pyramid with right angles at the apex. The three sides around the apex will be right-angled isosceles triangles, and only the base will be an equilateral. Such pyramids do complete the three-dimensional space around a point, but the reason that eight of them are required is not that 'the cube itself is completed from two pyramids'.[31] The reason is rather that eight cubes (and thus eight right solid angles) were needed to complete the space around a point in the first place (whereas in that case, as we saw, the commentator confusingly spoke of four around a line, 655.16–18).

Finally, the construct of eight 'pyramids' joined with their apexes pointing towards the centre of a sphere had been analysed a few pages earlier in Simplicius' commentary (drawing on Alexander), where it was clearly pointed out that the sides around their apexes will be isosceles rather than equilateral triangles and therefore there is no question of a reference to regular tetrahedra (Simp. *In Cael.* 613.25–614.10, commenting on Arist. *Cael.* 3.303a31–b2). As Alexander points out, one can obtain such quasi-pyramidal shapes with round bases and right angles at their apex by cutting a sphere by three planes mutually at right angles passing through the centre.[32] Simplicius reveals that this point too had proved particularly challenging for several commentators: πῶς δὲ τὴν σφαῖραν ἐξ ὀκτὼ μορίων συγκεῖσθαί φησιν, μαντείας ὄντως ἐδεήθησαν οἱ ἐξηγηταί ('commentators truly needed divination to explain how he can say that the sphere is composed of eight parts', 613.26–7)!

30 As Bob Lloyd suggests to me, this requires cutting along the diagonals of three adjacent sides of the cube, which are on one plane and form an equilateral triangle, or along shorter lines parallel to them moving towards the apex of the cube's solid angle. It also helps to visualise a cube passing through a plane corner first. A video clip illustrating this may be found at: http://alem3d.obidos.org/en/cubeice/movsl3. Mueller 2009: 134 visualises these arguments by taking the 'pyramids' in question to be prisms.

31 This claim is not wrong, however: at the half-way point of a cube's passing through a plane corner first, the slice takes the shape of a regular hexagon and we get a seven-sided pyramidal shape which looks like a larger version of the four-sided pyramid described above with the corners around its base sliced off.

32 Cf. Heath 1949: 175.

POTAMO'S EXEGESIS OF ARISTOTLE'S *ON THE HEAVENS*

This analysis cannot result in a definitive conclusion about the nature of the work by Potamo cited in Simplicius' commentary because of the limitations of the evidence. It does appear though, as indicated above (pp. 145–6), that it was a work written with Aristotle's text in mind, because our fragments address specific points of interpretation: how the first principles admitted by mathematicians are limited in number, and how certain geometrical shapes fill the space about a given point. It is hard to see what monograph written independently of Aristotle's *On the Heavens* would contain comments on both of these subjects; one might be led to think of a work on Pythagorean mathematics but, as Burkert has shown, deductive geometry and number theory are not equally parts of the same Pythagorean background and may even be incompatible.[33] Furthermore, as we have seen above, Potamo's method of proof based on diagrams is probably his own contribution to the discussion of polygons completing the space, and it is not paralleled in the Pythagorean version found in Proclus.

On the other hand, we need not think of a full line-by-line commentary on the entire *On the Heavens*. Potamo could have concentrated on the discussion of the elements in Book 3, or even more specifically on its mathematical aspects (he had a genuine interest in geometry as we can see from his hands-on, systematic analysis). Questions of mathematics and cosmology would have arisen around Potamo's time in those milieus where the *Timaeus* was the subject of intense study, and we have already highlighted the relevance of that text to Potamo's own physics. Thus the newly revived Aristotelian response was probably seen by Potamo as a fruitful counter-approach that needed to be addressed, even if not fully endorsed. As we have seen, Simplicius' wording makes better sense if one accepts the manuscript reading according to which Potamo was a critic of Aristotle's claim about pyramids.

As far as the relationship between this work by Potamo and what we know about the rest of his output is concerned, we may compare his exegetical activity here with the attested commentary on the

[33] Burkert 1972: 460–5.

Republic (see p. 72). This shows that the background to his eclectic project included intensive close study of original authoritative texts, and was not simply a matter of selection from ready-made doxographic anthologies. Moreover, this work on the mathematics of the elements could be part of his research into earlier views on physics that eventually enabled him to come up with his own set of four *archai*. The importance of geometry for describing the relationship between matter and the efficient force that moulds and shapes it is also emphasised by Varro, the Antiochean spokesman at Cic. *Ac*. 1.6 (in the context of superior Greek attainments in philosophy). It is legitimate to ask, therefore, whether Potamo's concerns with the geometrical possibilities of 'completing space' (the Greek word used throughout this discussion is *topos*) had anything to do with his specification of *topos* as a first principle. If this is the case, the connection will arise from the role of place in determining the shape and structure of the primary bodies of matter (i.e. their nature has to be such as to occupy place in a satisfactory way, whether that involves the prior existence of void or not). Since, as we have seen (above p. 123), Potamo's physics appears to be organised with corporeal entities (bodies, each one of 'the wholes') as the primary frame of reference, geometry and the various ways in which shapes and bodies may be arranged in space/place receive special importance.

CHAPTER 6

Further references to Potamo

It remains to examine two more references transmitting material attributed to a Potamo. Due to the non-philosophical context of their source texts and their isolated nature, these references are more difficult to pin down in terms of origin than the material from Simplicius. As a result, I will limit myself to a brief examination of the potential implications and additional information that may be gained from what can only be a tentative attribution to Potamo the Eclectic philosopher from Alexandria.

As a matter of fact, the name 'Potamo' is not at all common in Greek literary sources. Apart from the Eclectic philosopher, there appears to have been only one other prominent intellectual named Potamo in the ancient world. He was an orator from Lesbos, son of Lesbonax, whom the *Suda* calls a 'philosopher' (λ 307); but there is reason to suspect that the term is used for Lesbonax in the loose sense of 'intellectual', because the orator Potamo is also called a philosopher in the same *Suda* entry (Λεσβώναξ, Μιτυληναῖος, φιλόσοφος, γεγονὼς ἐπὶ Αὐγούστου, πατὴρ Ποτάμωνος τοῦ φιλοσόφου. ἔγραψε πλεῖστα φιλόσοφα, 'Lesbonax of Mitylene, a philosopher who was active in the time of Augustus, father of Potamo the philosopher. He wrote many philosophical (learned?) works').[1] The orator Potamo was active during the reign of Tiberius, when he taught in Rome and gained the emperor's favour:

Ποτάμων, Μιτυληναῖος, υἱὸς Λεσβώνακτος, ῥήτωρ. ἐσοφίστευσεν ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἐπὶ Καίσαρος Τιβερίου. καί ποτε αὐτοῦ ἐς τὴν πατρίδα

[1] It is not clear whether this Lesbonax should be identified with the grammarian who wrote Περὶ σχημάτων, ('On rhetorical figures'), though the possibility should not be excluded since there is no firm evidence for the date of the latter. See Blank 1988: 143–6.

ἐπανιόντος, ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐφοδιάζει τοιοῖσδε γράμμασι: Ποτάμωνα Λεσβώνακτος εἴ τις ἀδικεῖν τολμήσοι, σκεψάσθω, εἴ μοι δυνήσεται πολεμεῖν.' ἔγραψε περὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Μακεδόνος, Ὅρους Σαμίων, Βρούτου ἐγκώμιον, Καίσαρος ἐγκώμιον, Περὶ τελείου ῥήτορος.

Potamo of Mitylene; son of Lesbonax, rhetor. He taught in Rome under Caesar Tiberius. Once when he was going back to his homeland the emperor supplied him with the following written note: 'If anyone should dare to harm Potamo son of Lesbonax, let him consider whether he will be able to make war on me.' He wrote *On Alexander of Macedon*;[2] *Annals of the Samians*; *Encomium of Brutus*; *Encomium of Caesar*; *On the Perfect Orator*. (*Suda* π 2127)

According to Lucian (*Macr.* 23) Potamo the orator lived to ninety years old, and he was highly esteemed on his native island, as we can gather from several inscriptions.[3] The elder Seneca made use of his rhetorical work, and speaks about one of his declamations, which was on the popular theme of Leonidas and the three hundred at Thermopylae (*Suas.* 15–16).

There are two instances where it is not clear whether the reference is to Potamo the Eclectic philosopher or the orator. The possibility of an attribution to the orator because of theme and content is what differentiates these citations from Simplicius' citations of Potamo, which are equally without specification of the author's home city (Alexandria or Mitylene) or any other details, but have a clear philosophical purport. The first one comes from a papyrus fragment of an anthology of gnomic sayings (*PSI* 1476 = *CPF* 85, second century AD). These gnomic sayings are concise snippets of moral advice that are meant to be internalised and put to practice,[4] collected mainly from poets of the classical period (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Antiphanes, Menander etc.). Many of these sayings are also found in Stobaeus. The citation from Potamo is the only one from the extant fragments of the papyrus roll that is composed in prose rather than in verse:

Ποτάμωνος· | ἐπίτρεπε σῦ̣ καὶ τῇ τύχῃ̣ μετὰ τοῦ δ̣[ια]|βουλεύεσθαι.

From Potamo: together with deliberating, make allowance for luck too. (*PSI* 1476 Fr. D, 7–9)

[2] Plu. *Alex.* 61.3 (*FGrHist* 147) is probably a reference to this work.

[3] See *RE* XXII s.v. Potamon [3], esp. col. 1025.

[4] See Morgan 2007: 84–6.

This citation comes from what appears to be a thematic grouping of sayings 'on luck' (περὶ τύχης), a prominent theme in gnomic collections; elsewhere a section is labelled 'on virtue' (περὶ ἀρετῆς, Fr. B, 9). There may have been a further reference to Potamo in a section 'on wealth' (περὶ πλούτου): Ποτ[άμωνος?, Fr. A col. ii. 15.[5] If indeed these references come from the work of the Eclectic philosopher,[6] they may be linked to his discussion of the role of 'external' things in the achievement of the sort of life that constitutes the end (see above on ethics, pp. 129–39). Wealth was one of the primary examples of external goods in the Peripatetic tradition (e.g. D.L. 5.30), and luck features in some accounts, too (Cic. *Fin.* 5.75).[7] What Potamo seems to be advocating here is that one should be prepared to allow for the role of luck in influencing the outcome of events, an outcome that does not depend solely on the results of deliberation.

Moreover, if the extract is derived from Potamo's *Stoicheiosis*, there are important implications for the circulation and popularity of this work. It would support the view that the work had a didactic purpose and an elementary/simplificatory character, and may even have contained direct instructions for the reader in the second person. It would also suggest that there was a wider readership outside philosophical circles that found it useful and worth excerpting (at least as far as the section on ethics was concerned). Morgan has remarked on the breadth in the range of authors excerpted for the production of anthologies such as the one that contains the reference to Potamo, and has pointed out that this makes gnomic literature the most widespread means of access to material from Greek authors other than Homer in early Roman Egypt.[8]

The second uncertain reference to Potamo comes from the tradition of synonym-lexica, versions of which are transmitted under

5 See *CPF* I 1***, 637.

6 The most recent editors suspend judgement: 'si può essere incerti se si tratti effettivamente del filosofo alessandrino . . . oppure se non sia piuttosto identificabile con l'omonimo retore di Mitilene', *CPF* I 1***, 637–8.

7 'I remember that Staseas of Naples, your teacher and a Peripatetic of unquestionable repute, used to speak rather differently about these matters and agree with those who attached great importance to good and bad *fortune*, and to goods and evils of the body.'

8 Morgan 2007: 89.

the names Herennius or 'Eranius' Philo, Ammonius and Ptolemy.[9] Herennius Philo was a grammarian and Jewish historian from Byblos (cf. *Suda* φ 447), active in the late first century AD, and the other versions of the synonym-lexica are thought to be ultimately derived from his work. These lexica focus on the differences in meaning between words that look and sound similar (e.g. compounds of the same word with different prepositions), or try to distinguish between more subtle nuances in words that have a broader semantic overlap (e.g. αἰδὼς καὶ αἰσχύνη, 'reverence and shame', Ammon. 17, αἰπόλος καὶ ποιμήν, 'goatherd and shepherd', Ammon. 21). The reference to Potamo appears in the version transmitted under the name of Ammonius, in the section discussing the semantic variation between different Greek words for 'asking' and 'question':

κατὰ δὲ τοὺς φιλοσόφους ἐρώτησίς ἐστι φράσις συμβολικὴν ἀπόκρισιν ζητοῦσα οἷον †νέον† ἀμφίβολον, σαφές, ἄδηλον· αὗται γὰρ αἱ πέντε ἀποφάσεις συμβολικαὶ καλοῦνται. πεῦσις δέ ἐστι λέξις πρὸς ἣν οὐκ ἔστι συμβολικῶς ἀποκρίνασθαι, οἷον· 'ποῦ οἰκεῖ Ἀρίστων;', φησὶ γὰρ 'ἐν τῷδε τῷ τόπῳ'· οὐ γὰρ ἐνεχώρει ἐνταῦθα συμβολικῶς εἰπεῖν 'ναὶ' ἢ 'οὔ'. κατά τι οὖν περὶ τῆς διαφορᾶς ταύτης φέρονται καὶ οἱ φιλόσοφοι συμφώνως τοῖς προειρημένοις. Ποτάμων περὶ τῆς διαφορᾶς φησιν οὕτως·

'ἐρώτησις πεύσεως καὶ ἀνακρίσεως διαφέρει. ἐρώτησις μὲν γάρ ἐστι †σύντομος ἀπόκρισις†, πεῦσις δὲ μακρᾶς πράξεως ἀπαγγελία, ἀνάκρισις δ' ὑποδεεστέρων †ἐξήγησις†'.

According to the philosophers a question is an utterance requiring a symbolic answer such as 'yes', 'no' [reading ναί, οὔ], 'doubtful', 'clear', 'unclear'; for these five responses are called symbolic. An inquiry on the other hand is a speech act to which it is not possible to respond in a symbolic way, such as 'Where does Ariston live?' – for one says 'in such and such a place'; it was not possible in this case to reply symbolically with 'yes' or 'no'. In a way philosophers, too, are said to have handled this difference in agreement with what has been said before. Potamo says the following as regards the difference:

[9] The tradition is highly complicated, with the manuscript witnesses indicating a common origin, but also containing important divergences. The principal editions are: Ammonius, *De adfinium vocabulorum differentia*, ed. K. Nickau, Leipzig 1966; Herennius Philo, *De diversis verborum significationibus*, ed. V. Palmieri, Naples 1988.

'Question' differs from 'inquiry' and from 'examination'; for a question is (requires) a short reply, whereas an inquiry requires a report of a lengthy action, and an examination requires an explanation of subordinate [facts]. ('Ammonius' 188 p. 49 Nickau)

There are problems with the last part of the text, most probably arising from the fact that at some stage in the transmission the descriptions of the different types of question were supplanted by specifications of the type of answer required or expected in each case.[10] The problem is also evident in another branch of the tradition, which is presented as an epitome of the work of Herennius Philo, but does not quote Potamo in the entry on different kinds of question (ε 70–1, pp. 167–8 Palmieri).

It appears that Potamo was the source of philosophical opinions on the difference between kinds of question and the answers they require, which may be an indication that this Potamo is a philosopher himself, and thus identifiable with the Eclectic. The semantic distinction for which he is quoted was frequently rehearsed in the grammatical/lexicographical tradition,[11] but the more elaborate version that includes 'interrogation' is not prominent outside the various lexica of synonyms. As far as the philosophical connection is concerned, there is evidence of a distinction between 'question' (ἐρώτημα) and 'inquiry/interrogation' (πύσμα) within the Stoic theory of language (*SVF* II 186 = D.L. 7.66).[12] The former is a complete (αὐτοτελές) *lekton*, like a proposition, but it requires an answer (ἐρώτημα δέ ἐστι πρᾶγμα αὐτοτελὲς μέν, ὡς καὶ τὸ ἀξίωμα, αἰτητικὸν δὲ ἀποκρίσεως). The difference from the interrogation is that the latter does not admit of a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer, or just a symbolic nod, but requires more information (πύσμα δέ ἐστι πρᾶγμα πρὸς ὃ συμβολικῶς οὐκ ἔστιν ἀποκρίνεσθαι, ὡς ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐρωτήματος, Ναί).[13] If the passage from the lexicon of synonyms does indeed go

[10] See Nickau's apparatus *ad loc.*, citing a sounder version of the same information from Eustathius: ἐρώτησις μέν ἐστιν, ἡ σύντομον ἀπόκρισιν ἀπαιτοῦσα, 'a question then is the one that requires a short reply' (*Ad Od.* 3.69).

[11] See the references collected in Palmieri's *apparatus fontium ad loc.*

[12] Chrysippus had devoted separate works to these matters, listed at D.L. 7.191: *On Question*, two books; *On Inquiry*, two books, *Epitome on Question and Inquiry*, one book.

[13] See also Proclus, *In Alc.* 283.7: τῶν ἐρωτήσεων αἱ μὲν εἰσι [πευστικαί], πλείονος λόγου δεόμεναι πρὸς τὴν ἀπόκρισιν τῆς συμβολικῆς κατανεύσεως [ἢ ἀνανεύσεως], αἱ δὲ ἀρκοῦνται τῷ ναὶ καὶ τῷ οὒ μόνον.

back to the Eclectic philosopher, it is evidence that he had also discussed some form of linguistic theory in his work, strongly influenced by the Stoic classification of *lekta*. His contribution was to do away with the more complex part of the theory specifying the different 'symbolic' responses that can include body language, gestures etc. by invoking the 'short reply' instead, and to add the further category of 'interrogation' (ἀνάκρισις).

CHAPTER 7

Conclusions

A principal aim of this study has been to provide the basis for an assessment of what eclecticism meant for an ancient philosopher who was prepared to assume the term as a description of his own system or sect. The most obvious remark is that such a self-description for a philosopher is not paralleled in Antiquity, a uniqueness which makes Potamo's case all the more interesting and raises questions about why no other ancient philosopher proclaimed eclecticism in the same way, in contrast to frequent modern ascriptions of the term to a host of ancient thinkers. As ever, we have to rely almost exclusively on the information provided by Diogenes Laertius: we may now try to combine the results from the survey of the doctrines (ἀρέσαντα) associated with Potamo's sect with what can be gleaned from Diogenes concerning the sect itself and its status.

THE ECLECTIC SECT AND 'EACH OF THE SECTS' IN THE PROLOGUE OF DIOGENES LAERTIUS

In the case of the extract on Potamo from Diogenes' prologue (for the full text see above p. 5) we can be fairly confident that, although frustratingly brief, the passage contains the central characteristic and defining points of Potamo's philosophy (at least as these were estimated by Diogenes or his source, if he did not have direct access to Potamo). This is because our extract is presented as a sufficient and comprehensive account of the Eclectic sect, and Diogenes does not come back to it in the course of his work. Furthermore, it is clear that Diogenes himself treated Potamo's sect as a somewhat exceptional case, which could not be fitted into his classification of the other sects, and as a result he presented it as an appendix or afterthought

('one more thing', ἔτι δέ, 1.21), following his concluding remark that 'this is what I had to say about the beginnings of philosophy, its successions, the number of its parts and of its sects' (1.20).

The reason for this treatment of Potamo's sect is twofold: on the one hand, there is considerable chronological distance between its establishment and the beginnings of the main 'successions' (διαδοχαί) in the form of teacher–pupil relationships going back to the archaic period and terminating with Clitomachus, Chrysippus, Theophrastus and Epicurus (1.13–15). Potamo's sect was also much later than the Hellenistic sects (αἱρέσεις) listed at 1.16–20. As a result, Diogenes could not rely on the same Hellenistic sources (such as Hippobotus, cf. 1.19) that he used for the other sects, and would have to do separate research in sources closer to his own time for information on Potamo.[1] It has also been noted that for Diogenes the history of philosophy 'proper' ended in the early first century BC,[2] so perhaps we should treat Diogenes' report on Potamo as the result not of deliberate research, but of an accidental discovery that he found sufficiently interesting.

On the other hand, Potamo's sect is isolated in Diogenes' account because of its very nature. It cannot be discussed alongside and on a par with the other sects because its set-up explicitly presupposes them, since its tenets are a selection 'from each of the sects' (ἐξ ἑκάστης τῶν αἱρέσεων). Thus the Eclectic sect was seen by Diogenes as a product and a consequence of systematic history of philosophy and doxography as developed in his own work and in the prologue in particular, organised into sects and successions with some assumed internal homogeneity.

Unfortunately it is not clear whether Potamo himself viewed matters in this way. As Moraux observed, we cannot be sure whether Potamo believed that, for example, 'the most accurate impression' as a criterion of truth represented the doctrine of an entire sect treated as a homogeneous entity, or of an individual thinker or thinkers associated with a particular sect, who may however have had their own

[1] Gigante 1986: 47 compares the personal involvement in Diogenes' πρὸ ὀλίγου in the reference to Potamo to his equally self-referential but even more puzzling παρ' ἡμῶν for Apollonides of Nicaea, who was also a relatively late author, active in the reign of Tiberius (D.L. 9.109).

[2] See Sedley 2003: 38–9.

characteristic views.[3] Moreover, we have seen in the course of this study that Potamo's activity included close scrutiny of texts by major authorities such as Plato and Aristotle; therefore 'selecting from each of the sects' was not simply a matter of browsing through doxographical sources, but included independent consultation of the founders of these sects. The emphasis on the texts of Plato and Aristotle as opposed to those of e.g. Zeno or Epicurus is consistent with broader philosophical trends in the first century BC. A further problem arises with Diogenes' claim that Potamo selected from 'each' of the sects. On the one hand, we cannot be entirely sure which list of sects is being referred to here, especially given that a few paragraphs earlier Diogenes has listed several sects that we know very little about (1.18–19). On the other hand, Potamo's views do marginalise some sects (see below p. 175), therefore '*each* of the sects' appears rather exaggerated. I would be inclined to treat this as a slight misrepresentation on Diogenes' part, arising from his bid to classify and connect Potamo's *sui generis* sect with all that came before him.

It remains the case, however, that Potamo's sect presupposes much of the history of ancient philosophy up to the first century BC. The articulation of this debt in terms of selecting from sects rather than from prominent thinkers may be Potamo's own description (in which case the engagement with Plato and Aristotle would represent a particular way of approaching the legacy of the Academic and Peripatetic sects respectively). Or it could be a result of Diogenes' own preoccupations at this point in his work, where he is seeking to organise his material by means of classification into sects and successions. Given, therefore, both his Augustan date and the impossibility of associating him with any one particular sect or tradition,[4] it is not surprising that Potamo is not discussed again in the main body of Diogenes' work.

[3] Moraux 1986: 265 draws attention to the fact that Potamo is said to have selected from sects and not from individual thinkers, but also points out that we cannot be certain whether Potamo himself was operating from such a presupposition of homogeneity or whether this impression is due to Diogenes and/or his source.

[4] Potamo could not be classed alongside the *sporaden* ('isolated') philosophers of Book 9 (Heraclitus and Xenophanes), because while these two Presocratics appear to have had no teacher at all (in Xenophanes' case opinions differ, 9.18), Potamo is indebted to all the sects at once.

THE ELEMENTS OF POTAMO'S *ELEMENTARY TEACHING*

For all his dependence on earlier thinkers, the prevailing impression from the study of the surviving material on Potamo is that his aim was to offer his own approach to a series of philosophical questions, and not simply to anthologise existing views for historical purposes. And yet his methodology dictated that any answers are to be found by selecting among existing views. It was Potamo's new responses to key issues (criterion of truth, physical principles, moral end) that defined his philosophy and could serve to distinguish it as a sect not merely reproducing ideas developed elsewhere, but also different from others and worth following in its own right. The brevity and exclusive concentration of our source on the three main topics means that we are left without any information on how Potamo developed and supported his responses, and we may be missing out on other interesting ideas of his that were deemed too secondary and not part of the backbone of his system.

What conclusions can, then, be drawn about Potamo's views on epistemology, physics and ethics? The first point that immediately strikes one is the strong presence of Stoic terminology in our short text on Potamo: in epistemology, the term for the agent of judgement is τὸ ἡγεμονικόν (the Stoic concept of a ruling part of the soul), while φαντασία (impression) is also a key technical term in Stoic discussions of the criterion of truth. Moreover, it is notable that in physics Potamo stays within a Stoic framework when he refers to principles of 'the wholes' (τὰ ὅλα) rather than the 'all' (τὸ πᾶν), and also in ethics when he refrains from referring to the 'natural items pertaining to the body and things external to the person' (τὰ τοῦ σώματος κατὰ φύσιν καὶ τὰ ἐκτός) as 'goods'. This is indicative of the fact that Stoicism remained highly influential in mainstream philosophical discourse during the first century BC, and its technical terms prevailed in the usage even of authors who did not belong to that school, such as Antiochus and Eudorus. On the other hand, there are cases where Potamo clearly deviates from standard Stoic vocabulary: he speaks of the 'most accurate' (ἀκριβεστάτη) rather than the 'cataleptic' (καταληπτική) impression, and he selects 'matter and the active principle', i.e. only one half from each of the corresponding Stoic

pairs of principles, matter–god, passive–active (ὕλη–θεός, πάσχον–ποιοῦν).

At this point it is worth reflecting on the content of Potamo's pronouncements on the criterion, the principles and the moral end: does the Stoic terminology suggest a wholesale adoption of views formulated within that school? Many scholars have interpreted Potamo's criterion of truth in precisely this way, but it has been shown in the course of the present study that Plato's *Theaetetus* also forms a crucial part of the background. The Platonic text offered an important parallel and precedent for a conceptual subdivision between agent and instrument in a cognitive context. This enabled Potamo to bring together the hitherto rival conceptions of the criterion, namely human faculty and applied standard (analogous to a straightedge), and to claim that they are both criteria, but in different senses. In the case of the first principles of physics, we were again presented with a general framework listing concepts that can all be shown to have played some role in several earlier systems, including the Epicurean, but are not found in this particular combination anywhere else. It is again significant that these concepts are broad enough to admit several interpretations, particularly as far as the pair of matter and active force is concerned. Potamo's ethics is contained in a pronouncement on the moral end which is structured in a similar way to those on the criterion of truth and the principles. It begins with a statement reflecting a broad consensus, followed by an ambivalent statement on a more controversial issue (in this case, bodily and external advantages).

From the analysis so far, no school has emerged as the overwhelming influence on Potamo. Moreover, even though parallels can be found in the doctrine of various schools for most of Potamo's claims, his selection does not consist in simple 'cutting and pasting' of easily distinguishable and recognisable ideas, because some of his moves cannot be easily traced back to any of the traditional schools. Our lack of further evidence for Potamo's rationale and argumentation, as well as the fact that the works of Hellenistic philosophers do not survive in their entirety, create great difficulties for any such tracing. The information that he produced a commentary on Plato's *Republic* and his technical geometrical observations arising from Aristotle's *On the Heavens* serve as indications of what we are missing in terms

of Potamo's further activities and range of interests. What we can discern, however, is that Potamo made his selection eventually (or at least partly) in a bid to tackle specific problems that were prominent in the philosophical agenda of the Hellenistic period, such as how we can gain knowledge, what factors are involved in the constitution of the world and what life we should aspire to. The nature of these questions and the terms in which Potamo approached them connect him more closely with the concerns of Hellenistic philosophy and the on-going debates of the first century BC (as seen, for instance, in Cicero's *Academica* and *De Finibus*), rather than with Imperial times, when Platonism and Aristotelianism gained more influence and dictated the agenda. This conclusion, therefore, may be adduced in further support of the Augustan dating for Potamo, as opposed to a later date closer to that of Diogenes Laertius.[5]

The answers to these basic questions are the 'elements' of Potamo's *Elementary Teaching* (*Stoicheiosis*): the form in which they are presented by Diogenes Laertius underlines the preparatory and introductory character of this work, a work that seems to have been the principal source for Potamo's philosophy, the manifesto – so to speak – of his sect. Potamo's pronouncements on the criterion of truth, the first principles and the moral end also have a fundamental and programmatic character as basic building blocks from which a philosophical system may be constructed, and are thus 'elementary' in this sense, too (apart from their introductory/systematising function). In the course of his work, Potamo must have gone on to defend the rationale of his selections and to elaborate on the role of his chosen concepts. But it is significant that the elementary starting points in all three fields of philosophy are formulated in general and inclusive terms. In all three cases there is a distinction between the widely acceptable and the more controversial elements, which is highlighted each time in a different way: in the criterion of truth the 'most accurate impression' is presented *exempli gratia* (οἷον); in physics, the principles of quality and place form a separate pair linked to matter and the active principle by 'as well as' (τε . . . τε . . .); in ethics, bodily and external things are connected with the perfectly virtuous life

[5] See above pp. 67–72.

through the ambiguous 'not without' (οὐκ ἄνευ). It appears, therefore, that Potamo's eclectic teaching proceeded gradually from 'safer' notions to more complex or controversial matters.

AIMS AND METHODS OF ECLECTICISM

Thus far we have seen that Potamo's eclectic project, as laid out in his most representative work, consists in exploiting some basic common ground in several views held across the philosophical tradition, and supplementing it with certain refinements or additional concepts. This was done through conceptual subdivision or enumeration of factors with distinct roles (as in processes of coming-to-be, where these were matter, agent quality, place), for which he employed prepositional phrases as a convenient linguistic tool (more on this below).

At the same time, it is important to recognise that this focus on an initial consensus *does not* imply an intention to incorporate the entirety of received philosophical positions within a sufficiently broad (even vague), all-inclusive framework. On the contrary, there are features from the philosophy propagated by the different schools up to Potamo's time that are (at least implicitly) rejected. For example, the very specification of a criterion of truth immediately leaves scepticism outside the framework of selected philosophical outlooks, because a characteristic strategy of scepticism, found in the work of Sextus Empiricus, consists in creating overwhelming doubts over the existence of a criterion. Similarly, Academic sceptics raised persistent doubts about the validity of distinguishing marks between truth and falsehood. Moreover, it is clear that Potamo's ethical end does not allow a place for Epicurean pleasure as one of its central constituents, since it only focuses on issues arising from the Stoic and Peripatetic positions. In physics, the postulation of an active principle and of quality as distinct from matter arguably leaves atomism out of the equation, too. Eclecticism is not, therefore, an amalgamation of all the preceding history of philosophy, but involves certain conscious choices and exclusions which demarcate the range of accepted doctrines.

As far as we can detect on the basis of Diogenes' report, it remains the case that within this range the methodology does not permit us

to trace the construction of a prescriptive 'eclectic dogma'. A central assumption of Potamo's eclecticism is that philosophical truth is to be found within the views of the existing sects but, as we have seen, his selection takes the form of schematised responses to central issues, and these responses are compatible with a series of alternative interpretations/elaborations of the scheme. In other words, Potamo's eclectic philosophy is above all a method for identifying key issues and providing the terms in which possible answers can be sought. The absence of a crystallised dogma is reminiscent of the claims made in support of eclecticism in early modern times, when it was associated with autonomous thinking and freedom from authority (see Chapter 1, pp. 10–12). These connotations encourage a comparison with similar claims made in Antiquity on behalf of a different philosophical method, that of Academic scepticism. Both scepticism and eclecticism presuppose the history of philosophy and the variety of different opinions expressed down the years.[6] But while the sceptic perceives insurmountable disagreements and is led to suspension of judgement, the eclectic is entitled to select those elements that cohere to produce the basis for answers to philosophical problems, while leaving aside the more discrepant aspects of the 'source-philosophies'.

This freedom to select the more promising features of a system without being committed to it in its entirety was professed by Cicero as a privilege of the moderate Academic sceptic, who is prepared to assent to propositions that are 'plausible' or that 'resemble the truth'. Cicero put forward the idea of intellectual freedom as an advantage that the Academics have over the other schools: *hoc autem liberiores et solutiores sumus quod integra nobis est iudicandi potestas nec ut omnia quae praescripta a quibusdam et quasi imperata sint defendamus necessitate ulla cogimur* ('but we are freer and less inhibited because our power of judgement is intact, and we are not forced by any obligation to defend everything that is prescribed and almost imposed by some others', *Luc.* 8); *nos in diem vivimus; quodcumque nostros animos probabilitate percussit, id dicimus, itaque soli sumus liberi* ('we live one day at a time; whatever strikes our souls with its probability, we declare

[6] See Brunschwig 1988: 145–6: 'eclecticism is less a philosophical illness than an alternative medicine, aiming at curing the same ills as Scepticism does (namely, conflicts among the dogmatists), but in an opposite way and on the basis of a different diagnosis.'

it, and in this way we are the only ones who are free', *Tusc.* 5.33; cf. *Off.* 3.20; *Luc.* 60; *Tusc.* 5.82). It cannot be denied that there is an affinity between this type of attitude and eclecticism as far as the freedom to choose from different systems is concerned. An Academic like Cicero may potentially end up with the same set of beliefs as Potamo, selected from different areas of the philosophical spectrum. However, what sets Potamo apart from the Academic stance advertised by Cicero is not the process of selection or its end product, but rather the epistemological basis underpinning their respective methodologies. The sceptic, however moderate, operates on the basis of doubting whether things can be known with absolute and infallible certainty, and is guided by the persuasive power exercised by some impressions on his mind. The eclectic, on the other hand, works with the assumption that there are 'truths' to be found in the doctrines of each of the sects (see also Chapter 1, pp. 11–12 on Cousin), and selects on the basis of clarity and accuracy (the ἀκριβεστάτη φαντασία of Potamo's criterion) rather than persuasiveness. Once he has accepted as accurate certain views from each of the sects, he must be more committed to them than Cicero's Academic who 'lives one day at a time' and feels entitled to change his mind if something else appears more persuasive.[7]

Another philosophical approach that is often compared and associated with eclecticism is syncretism. There is no universal agreement among scholars about the exact meaning of this term, and it is even harder than eclecticism to pin down as far as the history of ancient philosophy is concerned, because there is not even one ancient philosopher professing it as a method or affiliation. The earliest occurrence of the word συγκρητισμός, in Plutarch (*De fraterno amore* 490B), in fact refers to the unification of otherwise feuding Cretan states in the face of an external enemy. Syncretism has been most helpfully used as a term to describe the stance of Antiochus of Ascalon, who claimed that there is no essential difference between Academic, Peripatetic and Stoic philosophy since they all stem equally from Socrates and

[7] Glucker 1988: 63 contrasts the 'well organised body of eclectic philosophy like that of Antiochus (or Potamo?)' with Cicero's stance which resembles more 'the bee flitting from flower to flower and choosing according to its taste and mood at the time'.

Plato, and are united in their opposition to hedonism and atomism.[8] No such historical assumption about in-depth agreement across the sects is implicit in eclecticism, which can acknowledge genuine differences (and thus avoid awkward attempts at harmonisation) and still select those elements that are mutually compatible. Moreover, Potamo programmatically distanced himself from attempts to reconstruct an 'original' philosophy with privileged claims to enlightened truth (as Plato's was for some), as well as from alternatives like Academic probabilism, by declaring the establishment of an entirely new sect.

What we can plausibly reconstruct from Potamo's philosophy shares some features with views ascribed to Antiochus, notably the attempt to accommodate somehow bodily and external advantages in the definition of the end, and their comparable pairs of principles. There are also theoretical differences, particularly as far as the criterion of truth is concerned, where Antiochus was a supporter of the Stoic cataleptic impression, without any subdivisions or conceptual refinements. But the most important difference between Antiochus and Potamo lies in the historical claims (or lack thereof, in Potamo's case); this brings us back to the most crucial piece of information regarding Potamo, namely the fact that he programmatically rejected all the traditions that Antiochus tried to unite under one banner, and claimed that the particular combination of methods and doctrines amounted to a new and different philosophy worthy of a separate sect.

To sum up, Potamo's eclecticism was an attempt to draw together and incorporate into his doctrines (ἀρέσαντα) what seemed to him worthwhile and 'most accurate' from the different philosophical traditions. Although each of the individual systems is rejected by the introduction of a new sect, there is implicit a positive assumption about existing traditions, namely that the truth is to be found within them and need not be sought in radical innovation.

[8] See Barnes 1989: 79 n. 103: '"Syncretism" and not "eclecticism" is the word: Antiochus did not think of himself as selecting the choicer morsels from each of three rival philosophies and constructing a new system from them; he meant to accept (almost) all the doctrines of the apparently diverse philosophies, claiming that they were to be envisaged as partners rather than as competitors.'

ECLECTICISM AND DIDACTIC PRACTICE

The title *Stoicheiosis*, chosen by Potamo for his main representative work, is an important indication of his didactic purposes. He intended to provide essential foundations for a philosophical system, upon which all further analysis could be built. If the report in Diogenes is not substantially modified from the original source, it would appear that Potamo chose a simple and schematic presentation, which may suggest an attempt to make his philosophy accessible to a wider audience of non-specialists. This popularising aspect of Potamo's work is particularly enhanced if he is identified as the source for some statements preserved on a papyrus containing an anthology of gnomic sayings (see above Chapter 6, pp. 164–5).

The use of prepositional phrases is also significant in this connection: these phrases support the simplification and systematisation of complex philosophical issues into sets of questions requiring only one-word answers, such as 'from what', 'by whose agency', 'through what' etc. In the form of relative clauses, these prepositional phrases serve to link different concepts to a central idea by describing causal relationships or senses in which a word is used. They also make theoretical points easier to understand because they operate with analogies from everyday life, such as the application of an instrument or the production of an artefact.

The didactic methodology reflected in the title *Stoicheiosis* could be Potamo's main debt to Epicurus, whose philosophy is otherwise marginalised in the context of the eclectic project. Epicurus stands out among founders of major sects for having placed so much emphasis on the summary and elementary exposition of doctrine in the form of easily memorable propositions, a practice also followed by mathematicians, most importantly Euclid.[9] This way of presenting philosophical ideas is particularly suited to eclecticism because it goes hand in hand with the reduction of complex sets of doctrine down to basic units, as exemplified in Diogenes' report on Potamo. This summary/elementary exposition was also favoured and recommended by modern authors who praised eclecticism as the ideal

[9] For Epicurus and στοιχείωσις see *Ep. Hdt.* 37 and the scholion on *Ep. Hdt.* 44 referring to the Δώδεκα στοιχειώσεις.

independent way of thinking, such as Jacob Brucker in the eighteenth century.[10]

We should next consider the intended audience of Potamo's eclectic teaching. The fact that he introduced a separate Eclectic sect and went on lecture tours to Ephesus (see above pp. 76–80) and probably elsewhere clearly indicates that his purpose was not to simplify and anthologise selected doctrines merely for the sake of information, but to acquire and train an audience. What, then, did he seek to train his students in? As far as we can tell, the essence of Potamo's message, which guarantees eclecticism its status as a sect and provides a distinct identity that sets it apart from other schools, is contained in his views on the criterion of truth, the principles and the moral end. We have also seen that, at least in the form that they have come down to us, these views do not always provide straightforward answers for the students to internalise. They often admit of more than one interpretation, or are compatible with the theories of more than one school. In other words, they do not contain a self-sufficient body of doctrine to set up against the systems of the other sects. But we would perhaps be doing Potamo an injustice if we took his motivation for putting things this way, i.e. looking for a broad consensus and elaborating from there, to be a desire to appeal to followers of existing schools. In other words, Potamo did not choose elements that command cross-school agreement in order to bring in followers by 'accommodating' erstwhile Stoics, Academics or Peripatetics.[11] I would suggest that his reason for choosing ideas that represent a consensus was that they have the highest likelihood of being true (or correct, or 'accurate').

As a result, the Eclectic sect probably did not address itself to committed followers of other sects, but rather to newcomers to philosophy (which would be compatible with the elementary character of Potamo's principal work and with his acknowledged public service at Ephesus), or to thinkers who were prepared to reject all the sects, as Galen would profess a century or so later. Unfortunately we cannot

[10] Braun 1973: 125.

[11] As the anonymous CUP reader very pointedly asks, would a Stoic who thought Potamo's system was consistent with Stoicism be tempted to leave the Stoa for it? The answer will probably have to be negative.

know exactly what Potamo intended his students to come away with. It is tempting to treat the seemingly open-ended formulations that we find in Diogenes as what we should expect from a free-thinking Eclectic philosopher: rather than offering normative answers or trying to combine disparate strands into a sweeping synthesis, he teaches in a way that enables his students to exercise their considered selection and be Eclectics in their own right, rather than followers of a fully prescribed system.

A TIME AND A PLACE FOR THE ECLECTIC SECT

The precise dating of Potamo's Eclectic sect has been among the more controversial issues dealt with in this study, because some scholars place it near the time of Diogenes Laertius and distinguish the Eclectic philosopher from the author of a Platonic commentary mentioned by the *Suda* (see above pp. 67–72). But the philosophical climate and the particular circumstances that emerged in the first century BC make the Augustan period a very plausible time for the emergence of an Eclectic sect. First of all, the authority of the three schools that had been dominant during the Hellenistic period (Stoa, Garden, sceptical Academy) was weakened, due to the decentralisation that followed Sulla's sack of Athens, as well as to the innovative approaches of individuals such as Posidonius and Antiochus of Ascalon. Furthermore, the first century witnessed a series of revivals of older philosophies (doctrinal Platonism, Aristotelianism, Pythagoreanism, Pyrrhonism) and the authoritative claims of 'the ancients' were added to the range of received philosophical opinions.

Under these circumstances, and with the disparity between rival positions thrown into sharp relief by doxographical accounts and sect-histories, it is perhaps not surprising that Potamo sought a way to overcome but also exploit this wealth of approaches and seek the answers to key philosophical problems through a process of selection and collection of elements from different sects. It is significant that in Potamo's work we find traces of most first-century revivals: he worked closely with the text of both Plato and Aristotle (he wrote a commentary on the *Republic* and produced some exegesis of the *On the Heavens*), and also engaged with the Pythagorean tradition (in his comments on mathematical principles and his geometrical proof).

The way in which Potamo's responses to the three central philosophical issues are presented is also indicative of a period of systematisation and formalisation, particularly as far as the use of prepositional schemes is concerned. We may detect here early traces of a tactic consisting in 'fitting together' different concepts and linking them to a central idea (the system is not yet fully developed because Potamo's formulas for the natural principles are not particularly tidy). This strategy became popular soon after Potamo's time, leading to the scholastic proliferation of prepositional expressions to describe different types of causes, the latter stages of which can be seen in Imperial Platonist texts.[12]

In addition, Alexandria proved to be a suitable place for the introduction of a new philosophical sect towards the end of the first century BC. The philosophical stimuli there were varied and multiform, with a strong representation of the new revivals in the work of Aristo (commentary on Aristotle), Eudorus (Platonism, Pythagoreanism, commentary on Aristotle) and Aenesidemus (Pyrrhonism). But since Alexandria had not been the exclusive 'home' for any of these trends (even Aenesidemus is connected to this city in only one source) or for any of the Hellenistic schools, the circumstances were conducive to a brand new initiative. Potamo's innovative approach, taking account of and choosing from multiple sects, may also be connected with the more long-standing Alexandrian scholarly traditions of textual study and production of learned commentaries, where scholars would consult a large array of sources and would often have to select the most accurate manuscript readings from a series of available witnesses. As we have seen (above p. 33), for first-century BC intellectuals in Alexandria including grammarians and doctors this practice of exploring, systematising and commenting on past achievements often involved engaging with the past of their own disciplines in a critical way, a practice that underpinned Potamo's eclectic project, too.

The scarcity of our information suggests that Potamo's attempt at this way of doing philosophy was short-lived. It is, however, indicative of the philosophical climate towards the end of the first century BC, when one had to contend with the ever-growing weight of tradition

[12] See above p. 122.

and the on-going rediscoveries of the great authorities of the past, as the Peripatos regained vigour and doctrinal Platonism gradually overcame the sceptical Academy. Eclecticism was a way of coming to terms with these developments, before the teaching of philosophy was again crystallised, however artificially and temporarily, into the four traditional philosophical schools with their respective Athenian chairs.

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